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A Journal of Opinion

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Axis Takes Another Bite

The Italian attack on Greece, after a three-hour ultimatum, marks the opening of the long awaited Axis campaign in the Near East. Greece has little intrinsic value to the conqueror; she is important mainly as a strategic pathway to the eastern Mediterranean, Turkey and Syria.

The Greek army is inferior to the Italian in numbers, training and equipment; the Greek air force and navy are so inadequate as to be almost nonexistent. The border terrain, to be sure, is difficult for the invader, and British help will be forthcoming. British naval supremacy will help along the coast and in the Aegean islands, but it is doubtful how many troops Britain can spare to reinforce her ally. The Axis undoubtedly counts on a quick victory, in spite of these obstacles.

The strategy is the same as in previous Axis aggressions. This is to take one bite at a time against an inferior enemy, trusting that the next victim will passively await its turn. It is probably for this reason that German troops are not engaged, and that no immediate move against Turkey seems to be in prospect. Turkey could do much to restore the balance if she would now throw in her army, but at the beginning she is hesitating, and her hesitation seems to be a mirror of that of the Soviet Union. But few can doubt that Turkey will be next.

If perchance Britain and Greece together could throw back the assault, the anti-Axis coalition would be immensely strengthened, and the way would at last be open for action against the Axis on an Eastern front.

France and Spain under Pressure

As the winter campaign develops, we shall doubtless learn the results of Hitler's conferences with Laval, Pétain and Franco. Laval at least is doubtless eager to offer every possible aid to fascism, and his succession to the post of Foreign Minister in the Vichy Cabinet—replacing Baudoin, who himself was sufficiently pro-Axis—is undoubtedly a bad sign.

But it does not seem likely that either France or Spain will join the war on Hitler's side in the sense of actually dispatching large armies against Britain. The last thing Hitler wants is an armed and powerful France, for Frenchmen in the end would certainly turn against him. And Spain is exhausted from civil war and could quickly be starved out by British blockade.

Hitler might, however, demand the aid of French colonial troops in Syria and North Africa, the use of the remaining French navy and of naval and air bases, and of bases in Spain against Gibraltar. Such concessions on the part of the vassal governments would not involve much active participation by the French and Spanish peoples, but would be of great aid to the Axis in gaining control of the Mediterranean. We have not yet seen the extent of the power which the dictators may be able to consolidate against the British Empire. We must be prepared for more bad news.

FDR in Campaign Harness

Mr. Roosevelt's remark in his first major campaign speech that he was not reluctant to correct the inaccuracies of his opponent because "I am an old campaigner and I love a good fight," brought forth well

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merited shouts of delight from his audience. Mr. Roosevelt *is* a good campaigner, and his supporters have longed to see him in action. His former aloof concern with the admittedly critical duties of the presidency did not so well suit his political style.

The President's unqualified pledge that there are no secret treaties or understandings with foreign powers should kill one of the overworked campaign rumors. His citation of economic statistics and of the anti-preparedness votes of Republicans in Congress should have the effect of factual authority against the wild allegations of his opponents. His charge that Republicans are now playing politics with national security just as they formerly played politics with national defense is a telling one. If Mr. Roosevelt continues with this effectiveness until the election, he should do much to counteract the gains registered by Mr. Willkie's vigorous campaign.

Prosperity on the Record

The Willkie partisans cannot deny that business is rapidly improving, but they have attacked the fundamental statistical evidence of that improvement. They have done so by questioning the validity of the Federal Reserve Board index of industrial production, which was cited by Mr. Roosevelt in his first campaign speech to show that production is now higher than in 1929.

This familiar economic benchmark was recently revised in order to make it more representative by including newly prominent industries like chemicals and aircraft and also to accord with the policy of putting all the government's economic indices on a comparable basis by adopting a uniform base period. The revised index was immediately challenged by Colonel Leonard P. Ayres in the widely circulated Cleveland Trust Bulletin. He found it just too good to be true. (The old index, incidentally, had recorded an even greater peak last December.) After applying several rule-of-thumb tests he rejected the revised index as untrustworthy. In the October Federal Reserve Bulletin, however, Colonel Ayres has been effectively refuted by a conclusive demonstration that his tests were in every case inappropriate. Moreover, the accuracy of the revised index is corroborated by the index independently derived by the privately endowed National Bureau for Economic Research.

Yet Mr. Roosevelt's speech was the occasion for a chorus of editorial and financial writers all reiterating Colonel Ayres's unfounded criticism. The damage is done. Thousands of business executives will now have a strong mental reservation about this crucial indicator of economic activity.

Defense Moves Up a Notch

The campaign has done much to obscure the importance of two major steps recently taken in national defense. The first is the establishment of a priorities board with Mr. Donald Nelson, chief government purchasing agent, at its head. No matter how great our industrial potential, we cannot concentrate it sufficiently on defense needs or on supplies to Britain unless there is authority to relegate less essential demands to an inferior place. Even the army and navy will stumble over their own feet unless priority is established among their orders. The second step is the reported decision to turn the automobile industry loose on mass production of military planes. It was clear from the beginning that the utmost capacity of the aircraft industry alone was insufficient to cope with German and Italian output. Even so, the decision may have come too late, since Britain sorely needs before spring an air force superior to that of her enemy.

Bribing Franco

The American government has apparently decided to make a handsome gift to Franco's Spain of 10,000 tons of flour. The present will go through the Red Cross, but its purpose will be political—to try to keep Spain from openly joining the war on the side of Germany.

This is another application of the appeasement policy that has failed everywhere else that it has been tried. The United States, for example, sent vast quantities of gasoline to Italy for many months, up to the very moment when she entered the war. Our idea was that this would keep Italy neutral; on the contrary, as soon as she had enough of our gasoline to be ready, she struck. Spain is now a member of the Axis; her position would be little changed if she formally declared war. Reliable information says many thousands of German soldiers are already on her soil waiting for the blow at Gibraltar. It is quite true that Franco's policies have brought hunger and misery to the Spanish population, but it is equally true that the United States cannot cope with this problem. Franco would ship out an equivalent amount of food to Germany if Hitler told him to do so. It is reasonably certain, moreover, that the British strongly object to this effort to feed a country that is a sleeping partner of her enemies.

Below Zero in Campaign Argument

This has been a dirty campaign. A good many arguments have been used that were false and in some cases the persons employing them must have known they were false. While this has been true on both sides, it seems to us that the Republicans have been far more guilty than the Democrats. Led by Mr. Willkie himself, the GOP orators have tried to frighten the American people out of their wits with predictions that Mr. Roosevelt intends to go to war, that it will prove he has signed secret treaties, that if he is reëlected, social-security payments will break down, and so on.

Of all the attempts to stampede the Americans we have seen none any worse than an editorial in The

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Pittsburgh Press, one of the Scripps-Howard newspapers. This editorial quotes a mysterious, anonymous "circular which has just come to our attention" which predicts that with another four years of the New Deal we should see a 50-percent inflation of the currency, so that a thousand-dollar life-insurance policy would have a purchasing power of only $500. New Republic readers hardly need to be told that inflation is unlikely before the limits of our productive capacity are reached, and even then it can be controlled by taxation and limitation on bank credit. We are sorry to see the great Scripps-Howard chain stoop to this sort of thing even in the midst of the campaign.

No Dictator Can Object

The few snappy words of government propaganda, stamped on envelopes along with the postmark, are familiar to receivers of letters throughout the world. At times of national crisis these words become stirring and urgent slogans: "Dig for Victory!" and "Buy National Defense Bonds!" replace the normal "Post Early and Avoid Disappointment."

One can expect a doubtful government to be uneasy in its appeals to the people. But of all the commentaries on the fall of France and the arrival of the old men of Vichy, none is so eloquent as the postal slogan we received on a letter from Lyon: "Love and protect the carrier pigeon, the servitor of your country!"

Georgia Justice

The attitude of the Supreme Court of Georgia toward the recovery of wages due under collective-bargaining contracts is given strange expression by two recent cases: Hicks et al. v. O'Jay Bedspread Co. and Jones et al. v. Hearst Consolidated Publications, Inc.

In the first case the court found the petition "brought by a volunteer labor organization, consisting of employees of defendant company, and seeking recovery of wages on account of an alleged breach of contract, stated a cause of action. It was, however, in its joinder of the organization with its individual members, subject to special demurrer." In other words, the court seemed to be saying that there was a cause of action but the suit should have been brought in the names of the individual members of the union.

In the second case the court found that "what is usually termed a collective-bargaining agreement . . . furnished no basis for a suit by individual members of the union for wages claimed to be due." It was held there was no cause of action for the individual members of the union.

Both agreements are similar in regard to the obligations assumed by the employing parties, but it appears that the first union erred in *not* suing as individuals, while the second erred *in* suing as individuals. Consistency was not entirely disregarded, however. In each case the decision was against the worker.

News Notes of a Week

China announced the recapture of Nanning, key city in Kwangsi Province. . . . British bombers covered 750 miles to bomb the Skoda works in Czecho-Slovakia. . . . The Philippines will be reinforced with two American fighter squadrons in the next few weeks. . . . The Vichy government announced it would not go to war with Britain, nor hand over units of its fleet to the Axis. We shall see. . . . The Empress of Britain, 42,000 tons, was bombed and sunk by torpedoes in the Atlantic.

Bethlehem and Republic steel companies were reported opening union negotiations with the CIO. . . . Willkie questioned Roosevelt's peace-pledge and declared the boys were almost on their way to the transports. . . . He promised that if elected he would place housing on an efficient basis. . . . James A. Farley announced he would vote "straight democratic." . . . The World's Fair closed, with bondholders promised 38.4 cents on the dollar. . . . Japanese subjects in the United States and its possessions became subject to a census—presumably a prelude to military conscription—on order of their government.

The Campaign in Essence

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE in the act of electing a President during one of the historic crises of modern times—a crisis during which all the concepts and processes of democracy are threatened as never before since they were won in the revolutionary era at the beginning of the nineteenth century—presents an almost breathless spectacle for those who are anxious about the future of mankind. On the surface, the campaign may seem as confused and sordid as any, but if one looks deeper, its meaning appears more closely.

The basic strength of each candidate rests upon a different order in our society, and a different view of the functions of government. The solid core of Mr. Roosevelt's supporters, as revealed by many scientific tests of opinion, consists of those in the lower-income brackets. It includes the unemployed and the poor farmers, and extends upward in the income scale to take in most of industrial labor and many of the white-collar workers, those who most feel the need of economic and social security. Allied with them are the professional people and the thinkers in all income classes who accept the fuller implications of democracy—its assertion of universal brotherhood, its aspiration for equality of opportunity. These cohorts believe that democracy is not a finished achievement but a promise and a continual struggle, and that democratic government can be an agency of the popular will toward better things.

Those who make up the core of Mr. Willkie's supporters, including most of the upper-income classes

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and spreading down from them, are concerned mainly with protecting established privilege and power against the encroachments of popular government. They distrust the masses, and believe that those who have achieved wealth and position know better what is good for the people than they do themselves. Their attitude in its extreme form is symbolized by a campaign postcard which they have widely circulated—a picture of a grinning, idiotic youth bearing the caption, "I'm for Roosevelt." These people assign all progress to individual enterprise; they fear a strong or centralized government—when it is democratically controlled. They have consistently fought the New Deal reforms; for them the chief virtues of government would be a balanced budget and non-interference with private business.

The long smoldering hatred of Mr. Roosevelt as the successful champion of everything these people fear has burst forth into their vehement enthusiasm for Mr. Willkie in this campaign. They knew almost nothing about him when it started except that he had been a big-business executive and a relentless enemy of Mr. Roosevelt's pet projects—the TVA and discipline of utility holding companies.

Neither of these cores of support contains a majority; neither, alone, could elect a President. Mr. Roosevelt's adherents could come closer to doing it than Mr. Willkie's if their ranks were solid, since those in the lower-income brackets are far more numerous than those in the upper. Both parties, however, have had to aim their campaign arguments at the group in the middle—the undecided or "independent" voters who are mostly in moderate income classes. The more comfortably situated farmers, the small business men, the salaried executives, the minor bosses and large sections of the clerical employees hold the balance of power, under existing conditions. Because of the greater potential strength at the polls of those who are naturally Mr. Roosevelt's supporters, Mr. Willkie has had to do his best to win also industrial labor, the poorer farmers and the unemployed.

Mr. Willkie is a man who cares little for intellectual consistency, and can hold mutually conflicting views with apparent sincerity. He can say one thing one day and its opposite the next, and convince his hearers each time that he means what he says. He probably does; his interest is in achieving a particular objective rather than in integrity of ideas. In his business career he has always said what it seemed necessary to say to serve his cause, whether or not it corresponded with the facts; this has involved no sense of guilt on his part, since to him words are merely an instrument for approaching a predetermined goal. Such a man is, superficially at least, an ideal campaigner when the job of getting elected consists in putting together a majority from groups of people who disagree with each other. Most politicians have something of this trait; it was shown in its most extreme development in the campaigning of Hitler when he was on the way up. (We do not mean to imply that Mr. Willkie is another Hitler.)

Mr. Willkie has thus managed to solidify his diehard supporters by remarks about the supremacy of private enterprise, about balancing the budget, about the New Deal's supposed tendency to state socialism and its alleged halting of prosperity by discouragement to business, while at the same time he has, in seeking new support, endorsed all the New Deal reforms and has by implication promised to spend even more than his opponent. He is counting on the natural tendency of people to remember what pleases them, and to forget what they dislike. In the same way he has played on both sides of the issue of war and preparedness—trying to placate traditional Republican isolationism and the German and Italian voters by his accusations that the President is leading us toward war, while attempting to win the interventionists by advocacy of stronger action in preparedness, aid to Britain and defiance of the dictators—the very policies by which the President is supposed to have brought war nearer.

The Democrats on their side have done their best not to frighten any of the undecided voters. Mr. Roosevelt has emphasized, not only the reforms on the record, but conciliation toward employers, a friendly attitude toward business, the extent of recovery, the coöperation of big-business executives in the defense program and his aversion to war.

It is extremely unlikely that the President will win by any such landslide as in 1936. Any party in power suffers a disadvantage because of the hopes it has disappointed and the enemies it has made; the party out of power needs only to exploit these hostilities and obtain popular credence for its new pledges. Yet the basic advantage, in a democratic environment, of the general position occupied by Mr. Roosevelt is so great that a large majority of his natural supporters will probably see where their true allegiance lies. In our opinion he would have been still stronger if he had solidified the democratic ranks by greater activity in his chosen direction, instead of having lost support for his reforms among some of their beneficiaries by making so many concessions to the enemy.

A large number of Americans have sensed that a tested leader of the democratic aspiration—now by far the most eminent in the world—must be elected as a symbol of democratic security in the present world hurricane, no matter what the minor issues may be. It is this kind of feeling for the true proportion of affairs, for the ultimate direction, that in the end justifies our faith in democracy. The people may not be able to cope with all the technicalities of argument or the subtleties of propaganda, but in the end a democratically trained people usually understands the main issues even better than its critics and befuddlers.

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Mr. Lewis Shows His Spleen

THE REASONS THAT John L. Lewis can legitimately cite for labor dissatisfaction with the Roosevelt administration have long been matters of public record —Mr. Roosevelt's hesitancy in enforcing the rights of unions to collective bargaining under the NRA, his "a plague on both your houses" during an important strike for recognition, his failure to support the unions' demands that governmental orders not be placed with concerns violating the Wagner Act or the Walsh-Healey Act, lax administration of the Labor Standards Act fixing minimum wages and maximum hours, his failure to eliminate unemployment.

In these respects the present administration has not lived up to its own high standards. The standards themselves were higher than those of any previous administration and have suffered continual and bitter attack by the Republicans and conservative Democrats. It was undoubtedly the outcry in the press and the opposition in Congress that prevented Mr. Roosevelt from acting more vigorously in enforcement, or pressing still more actively for industrial recovery. As for Mr. Lewis' charges that Mr. Roosevelt is seeking war or is acting in a dictatorial fashion, they are just politician's sauce on the main dish, and alone would never have caused the CIO leader to declare against the President.

We can understand how dissatisfaction of this kind might have caused a trade-union leader of narrow vision and dogmatic temperament to remain aloof from the campaign, or perhaps to support a third party as a protest. What Mr. Lewis did, however, was to urge the election of a man who before the campaign never even pretended to have standards of labor administration as high as those of the President, a man whose own corporate subsidiaries hired labor spies and fought union recognition bitterly. Behind this candidate—from Mr. Ernest T. Weir, treasurer of the Republican National Committee, down—are nearly all those who have been labor's bitterest enemies and those whose opposition was probably decisive in limiting the New Deal's labor performance. All these things also are of record.

On the ground of the labor movement's interest alone, therefore, Mr. Lewis' action can be accounted for only on the ground of monumental spite and vanity. In his eyes it is more important to punish a friend of labor who, in the exercise of his public duties, did not see 100-percent eye-to-eye with Mr. Lewis, than to keep out of office the party that is historically labor's enemy, a party now led by a man whose own business record is spotted with anti-labor activity, and whose only claim to support consists of campaign promises to perform miracles. These promises are inconsistent with other promises by the same candidate.

The argument of TRB in another column, that Mr. Lewis believes Mr. Roosevelt is more popular with the rank and file than he is, and that it is a bad thing for labor to be led by a changeable politician rather than its own experienced leaders, is a strong argument against the stand Mr. Lewis has taken. For he has, in so far as his stand is effective, split his own following beyond repair, and in so far as it is ineffective, sacrificed his own leadership to Mr. Roosevelt or to labor leaders who support the President. It was stubborn vanity of the same kind on the part of Mr. Lewis that has long prevented a healing of the dangerous breach between the CIO and the AFL. Lewis' leadership during the past two years has done almost as much to weaken and split the labor movement as it did to strengthen the movement during the expansion of the CIO.

A still greater proof of Mr. Lewis' incapacity to meet the test of the present world crisis is his complete misjudgment of the international situation and of Mr. Roosevelt's role in it. No other democratic leader has the worldwide prestige of the American President. There is a titanic struggle going on between champions of democracy and a system of government under which trade unions are the first sufferers, but only the first. For the American electorate to repudiate Mr. Roosevelt at this moment would be a calamity; it might turn the tide in favor of Hitler and Mussolini. We should not expect Weir and Girdler to see this; we should not expect the big-business newspapers to understand it. But when a labor leader allows his cherished grievances to blind him to this most obvious fact, he reveals his limitations so clearly that it is no longer possible to ignore them.

We hope that Mr. Roosevelt will be chosen by an overwhelming majority of the labor vote, and that Mr. Lewis, following his promise, will resign his CIO office. The labor movement will be benefited by the latter event almost as much as by the former.

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Nailing the Utility Lie

DURING THE CAMPAIGN The New Republic has received a number of letters defending Mr. Willkie's repeated statements that public-power systems are unfair competitors of private systems because the former are subsidized in various ways. Similar statements appear in speeches or in print, almost every day. No economic delusion is more widely entertained than this, on account of the ceaseless utility propaganda, of which Mr. Willkie was for years one of the leading mouthpieces. In general and in particular it is charged that the TVA and other publicly owned systems pay no taxes, that they charge up no depreciation, that they pay no interest, and that these facts account for the lower rates they offer to consumers. What are the facts?

Taxes.—It is technically true that the TVA and municipally owned distribution systems cannot, for the most part, legally be taxed. But the public systems make payments in lieu of taxes. Mr. Gordon R. Clapp, general manager of the TVA, states that the payments by the TVA to state, county and local governments now exceed by $527,000 all former *ad-valorem* taxes on private-power property acquired by the TVA. The former taxes are estimated at $1,018,000 a year; payments by the TVA at $1,545,000 for 1941.

If federal taxes be included, Mr. David E. Lilienthal, director of the TVA, states in a letter to The New Republic that the balance of the TVA's income over all costs, which is paid into the Treasury annually, more than offsets the federal taxes formerly paid by the private companies which are now in the TVA system. Dr. John Bauer, noted utilities authority, states in a letter to The New York Times that privately owned utilities paid, in 1936, 13.2 percent of their gross income in taxes, whereas publicly owned utilities paid in lieu of taxes 25.8 percent of their gross revenues.

Interest and Depreciation.—The TVA enters on its books no charge for interest, because it has no legal authorization to do so; it is true that no interest, as such, is paid on the federal appropriations which it receives. But it is not true that the TVA robs either private competitors or federal taxpayers.

We have it on the authority of Mr. David E. Lilienthal, director of the TVA, that its "power revenues in the fiscal year 1940 covered all costs, and after providing for straight-line depreciation of $3,700,000 on an average investment in power assets of $170,000,000, a balance of $4,600,000 remains, a return of 2.7 percent. If interest were taken at three percent of average power investment and depreciation accordingly adjusted to a three-percent-sinking-fund basis, thus reflecting the combined effect of these charges to power operations, there would be a surplus *over and above such interest* of more than $1,100,000 for the fiscal year. (The TVA depreciation is stiffer than most private companies provide.)"

The report of the Joint Congressional Committee investigating the TVA states on pages 176-7:

"The committee's engineers conclude that for the ten-dam system, after paying out-of-pocket charges, 3¼-percent interest, amortization and replacement, and a full tax equivalent to the Treasury, the present wholesale rates will provide a substantial balance of revenues which can be applied to the maintenance and liquidation of the other Authority programs. . . . The committee accepts the conclusions of its engineering staff as representing as nearly accurate a forecast of the Authority's operating results as present information renders possible."

Municipally owned and coöperative electric utilities do pay interest on the capital they must raise by borrowing.

It is argued that privately owned utilities are more efficiently operated than those publicly owned, and hence if the latter charge lower rates it must be because they are subsidized. There is no such difference in efficiency, and subsidies do not account for lower public rates. The explanation of the difference in rates is simple. Publicly owned utilities are operated in the interest of consumers rather than that of bankers, investors or speculative promoters. They therefore use surplus earnings to retire indebtedness, to extend and improve plant and to reduce rates, rather than to pay returns on an inflated capitalization. The result of each rate reduction is an increase of sales and, in turn, larger surplus earnings. Private companies which have been forced by public competition to reduce rates have discovered that their profits also are increased by this practice. This is the case with Mr. Willkie's own former companies in the TVA district.

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After Greece—Islam?

NOT BY ARMS ALONE are the Axis powers assaulting the British positions in the Near East. Among the primitive peoples of the Biblical world, totalitarian guile and totalitarian propaganda may conceivably play an even greater role than they did in the conquest of Europe. One of the prime aims of Fascist Italy in the present conflict is to impress the Arab peoples with the invincibility of the Axis armies, and to stir up revolt against Britain throughout the Arabic world. It is no secret that when Ramon Serraño Suñer, emissary from Franco, visited Rome recently, he was urged, among other things, to assist Mussolini—the "Protector of Islam"—in the task of winning over the Arab population of Northern Africa.

Since the conquest of Ethiopia, and particularly since the beginning of the Italo-English conflict in the Mediterranean, Mussolini has devoted much attention to the Arabs. The same Fascist Italy which suppressed the Libyan revolt with a cruelty unparalleled in colonial history, today sheds crocodile tears over the fate of the "persecuted" sons of Islam in the countries under British and French control. By means of intrigue, bribery, flattery and devious pressure, the Fascist agents have succeeded in enlisting the support of some of the more unscrupulous and ambitious of the Arab politicians and have, in addition, been able to stir up widespread unrest among the Arab masses.

Mussolini's propagandists have ballyhooed him as "the invincible warrior" throughout Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, Morocco, Turkey and even Afghanistan and India. Every international event has been exploited to point out the "weakness" and the "perfidy" of the French and the English, as contrasted with the "dynamism" and "magnanimity" of Imperial Italy. Much of this propaganda was carried on with proper diplomatic discretion—and in this the Italians were abetted by the incredible passivity of the British and the French—but the bulk of it has been brazenly carried on in the press and over the radio.

It was some three years ago that Mussolini conceived the idea of anointing himself "Protector of Islam." The investiture took place during his spectacular tour of Libya in March, 1937. The public square of Tripoli was chosen for the ceremony. The details had been carefully prepared by Fascist officials. The Arab population had been ordered to decorate their houses and shops with Italian banners, which Marshal Balbo's carabineers distributed profusely. The "Sword of Islam," which was to be presented to Mussolini, had been bought in Florence with government funds; to make it look more authentic, Libyan Jewish goldsmiths had been paid to engrave Arabic designs on it.

The Protector-Elect, mounted on a pure-white Arab charger, awaited the approach of two hundred Libyan chieftains, herded together from the most distant corners of Tripolitania. The first of these carried the sword, which had only that moment been handed to him by Marshal Balbo. He presented it humbly to Mussolini, who accepted it with the dignity of a Caesar.

"Mohammedans!" shouted Il Duce, from his saddle: "You have presented me with the most acceptable of all gifts—this sword, symbol of force and justice.

"Fascist Italy," he continued, resting the weapon upright on his harness, "wishes to prove its solidarity with Islam and its sympathy with the Moslems of the whole world. Rome will show you with her laws how she cares for your increasingly greater destiny."

Then, unsheathing the sword, he raised it straight above his head. "Mohammedans!" he cried again. "Spread these, my words, in all the homes of your cities and villages even to the last shepherd's tent. You know that I am a man sparing in promises, but when I promise, I fulfill."

But the Arabs of Libya knew only too well how much Mussolini's promises and professions of friendship were worth. The very day after Mussolini's spectacular investiture, one of the most prominent Arabs of Tripoli complained to me that thousands of young Arabs had been taken from their homes during the night to be enrolled in the Libyan divisions of the Italian army. He spoke bitterly about the treatment accorded to Moslem notables and religious leaders who had been compelled to stand for hours in the Tripoli city square waiting for Mussolini's arrival, and had then been led like slaves before the "Protector."

From Palestine to the Himalayas the word was carried that Islam had found a new protector, and that Mussolini was the friend of the Arab peoples. Italy's entire consular and diplomatic service in the Near East, operating with the assistance of whole corps of paid propagandists, was set to work to convince the Arab countries that Italy, like them, was a victim of the "robber powers," England and France. The Italian radio in Bari informed the natives that they were being exploited by imperialist masters, and that England and France hoped to keep them in subjection.

The Italian agents flooded the Moslem countries with millions of pamphlets showing pictures of aqueducts, reservoirs, hospitals, roads and schools, to prove how much better off the Arabs would be under Mussolini's "Roman rule." A *leit-motif* of the Italian propaganda was to contrast the welfare of the Moslems in Libya and Italian Somaliland with the treatment meted out to their co-religionists in Palestine under the

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"Anglo-Jewish yoke." The Fascists obviously banked on the expectation that the Arab masses had already forgotten the brutality with which General Rodolfo Graziani—the same Graziani who is today in charge of the Italian campaign in Egypt—suppressed the Arab revolt of 1922-29 in Cyrenaica. But in this expectation they were mistaken: for the pacification of Cyrenaica was something that could not easily be forgotten. In the course of the "pacification" hundreds of villages were sacked and burned and uncounted thousands were executed; in seven terrible years the population of the territory fell from 1,300,000 to 800,000 terrorized human beings. The bloody measures of "the butcher" Graziani aroused the fiercest indignation throughout the Arabic world and this indignation still smolders.

I toured Italian Africa shortly after the final suppression of the Arab rebellion and I was permitted to visit one of the many concentration camps that spotted the Libyan desert. In the camp of Sidi Ahmed el-Magrun alone, more than 15,000 men, women and children were herded together. Entire villages from the mountain range of Jebel, where the rebellion against Italian rule had been particularly violent, were interned under conditions of unbelievable misery and degradation. The Italian officer who conducted me praised the "justice and tolerance" of the Fascist government, and explained that it was all a matter of "liberating" the Arabs from the tyrannical rule of the Senussi family and their tribesmen.

Cyrenaica has not been forgotten. Yet there can be no doubt but that the endless stream of Italian money and the relentless barrage of Italian propaganda have had some effect on the Arab peoples—especially since the collapse of France and the consequent shift of the balance of power in the Near East. But in order to win the Arabs over to his side, Mussolini had first of all to win Egypt, for ever since Turkey became a secular state, the city of Cairo has been the religious and intellectual capital of Islam. Mussolini is aware that so long as Egypt remains outside the orbit of Axis influence, all his efforts to enlist Arab support will have no consequential effect. Il Duce has, accordingly, expended far more money and effort on Egypt than on any other country.

The Italian colony in the Nile Valley today constitutes the best organized and the best disciplined contingent of Rome's fifth column. Until the Egyptian government clamped down on fascist activity, every Italian was a member of one of the numerous Fascist organizations: there were the Action Squads, the Leisure Association, the Fascist Youth, the National Italian Veterans' Association, the Arditi d'Italia, a number of women's organizations, etc., etc. The Italian cultural and patriotic organizations were headed by Dr. Giuseppe Galassi, editor of Giornale d'Oriente, an Italian-language newspaper financed by the Fascist government. All of these groups were thoroughly regimented, staged frequent reviews of a quasi-military character, and until recently they were allowed full freedom of action. The Giornale d'Oriente was even brazen enough to publish a map showing the bombing distances of Cairo and Alexandria from Italian bases in the Mediterranean.

It was already late in the day when the Egyptian government began to check up on fifth-column activities. Though a tremendous number of suspects have been rounded up, Italian propaganda had sunk its roots so deep and so wide that the weeding-out will be a highly difficult task. Most of the 60,000 Italians who live in the Nile Valley were born in Egypt: they are acquainted with the language and the customs of the Arabs, and what is even more important, they know how to cope with the Egyptian mentality. The late King Fuad, who received part of his education at the Military Academy in Turin, always displayed marked pro-Italian sympathies—and this sympathy still colors the outlook of a substantial section of the Egyptian nobility. Many high positions in the governmental service were until recently occupied by Italians who, it goes without saying, employed their influence to persuade the nation's leaders that the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was no more than a snare and a scrap of paper. Apparently banking on the existence of widespread sympathy in the Egyptian body politic, the fascist paper Messagero recently addressed an open letter to King Farouk, which concluded with the following exhortation: "Take courage, young monarch. Youthful Italy will aid you. All we ask is some concrete indication of your desire to be delivered."

But King Farouk has few reasons to trust the sincerity of the "Italians, bearing gifts." Despite the fact that he discharged the four Saadist Ministers who demanded an immediate declaration of war on Italy, essentially his policy is one of waiting and watching. In governmental circles there is also little faith in the Italian professions of friendship. Only a few weeks before Italy's entry into the war, Marshal Balbo made an unexpected visit to Cairo. He informed the Italian colony through the medium of the "gerarchi" who had been called together in the Italian legation for the occasion, that the day of "liberation" was near, and that the Italian troops massed on the Libyan-Egyptian border were awaiting the signal to march. But when he was received by Prime Minister Mohamed Mahmud Pasha later in the day, he assured him that Mussolini wanted only the friendship of Islam.

"Yes," returned the Egyptian chief of government sardonically, "just as he did with Albania, which was the only Mohammedan country in Europe. Do not forget that our royal house is descended from a great Albanian family, and we were deeply grieved at what Il Duce did to that little country."

There are many potent reasons why Egypt should shun the fate of becoming an Italian protectorate.

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Among the mass of the people there is no love lost on the Italians, because Italian small traders, professional men, artisans and farmers are their most serious competitors. The fact that Rome is the center of the Catholic faith would by itself be sufficient to arouse enmity toward the Fascist "liberators." And that the ruler of a Christian country should have proclaimed himself "Protector of Islam" is highly insulting to the Arabs.

"The real protector of Islam is Allah," declared Sheik Mustafa El Maraghi, renowned rector of the Al Azhar Moslem University in Cairo, after Mussolini's pompous investiture on the public square of Tripoli, "and it is not proper to ask the protection of an infidel whose only intention is to use the devoted sons of Allah for his own purposes."

Mustafa El Maraghi exercises an immense influence over the youthful and religious King Farouk, and in the final analysis it may be he who will determine the attitude of Farouk and of Egypt in the critical days to come.

While the war in the desert remains at issue, the Italians will naturally redouble their efforts to impress the Egyptians with their military might and to convince them that all their actions are motivated only by friendship for Islam. By such measures, and with the help of Franco, Mussolini hopes to win over the hesitating Arab communities of the Mediterranean basin.

Should the Italian advance penetrate further into Egypt, it would have the assistance of a well organized fifth column composed of both Italian and native agents. Demoralizing rumors, sabotage and all the other weapons of the fifth column's arsenal would be employed in an effort to create a state of panic among the people. In this the Italians would probably have the assistance of a small extremist organization which calls itself Young Egypt, and whose leader, Ahmed Hussein, has achieved great notoriety for the organized manner in which he has smashed the windows of Jewish and Greek shops in Alexandria and Cairo.

But with the exception of Hussein and his cohorts and a certain number of individuals, the Egyptian people have no illusions about their fate if the Italian legions should ever seize the Suez Canal and install themselves in the valley of the Nile. While Mussolini continues to coo his friendship and lavishly promise the Arab world that he will "redress the balance," the faithful stubbornly ask how it could be that the "Protector of Islam" should have invaded Moslem Albania, and by what miraculous metamorphosis Graziani, the "pacifier" of Cyrenaica, will deliver them from the British yoke. The thousands of Libyan refugees, including the head of the Senussi family, who fled from Cyrenaica to Egypt, constitute a living testimony to the benefits of "Roman civilization" and to Il Duce's love for Islam.

EDWARD KLEINLERER

The Future of Gold

All over the world the use of gold as money has for a long time been declining. The first inroad was the elimination of gold as a medium of exchange. The next was the abandonment of gold as redemption material for the circulating medium. Then followed the forgoing of gold as the regulator of the currency supply. It is true that, in this country, a very remote control of this sort is still retained, but it is, at present, of no practical significance. Everywhere else such control has been relinquished and replaced by other and, at least potentially, better methods of regulation. Even in the international use gold is no longer a regulating mechanism. The one-way movement which has marked the last quinquennium, until we have nearly all the world's gold, is not only evidence of this fact but practically precludes the use of gold for any regulating purpose.

Gold, of course, is still employed, over part of the world, as a means of settling international debit balances, but it has no peculiar properties giving it any special virtue in this respect. The sole reason for the phenomenon is that in this country (and in no other) the monetary authorities are still ready to buy gold in unlimited quantities at a fixed price. If we should offer to do as much for mercury, tin, rubber, wheat, or any of innumerable other commodities, any one of them would be not only as "good as gold" but would become as readily employable as gold now is for settling international balances, whether or not this country was involved in the particular balance in question.

Since its employment as money was the principal, the preëminent, use of gold, it is small wonder that doubts as to its present real value are rising. The plain truth is that the apparent value of gold is a sham and arises entirely from the fact that, as mentioned above, our Treasury is buying gold at a (high) fixed price. The ambiguous nature of the present value of gold is evident from the consideration that, regardless of real demand, we could increase its money value at will by the simple expedient of once more raising the price at which we are prepared to buy it freely. In a similar way, we could give an equivalent "value" to sea-weed.

The maintenance of our present gold policy is, however, of urgent importance to Great Britain in her struggle with Nazidom and, since Great Britain's success is of urgent importance to us, no present change in our policy (unless possibly to raise the price of gold still higher!) should be given any consideration. If Britain is defeated, the gold that we now have is never likely to be of much use to us. Even if this defeat does not

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occur, the chance of our "cashing in" on our gold is small unless we prove so inept at monetary management that gold will come back as the sole or principal medium of exchange in default of the ability to handle monetary matters with intelligence. In spite of the doubt of its ultimate value, our purchase of gold now, however, is justifiable as a cost of defense.

Unless we raise the dollar price of gold, or embargo its export, there are scarcely any conceivable circumstances, short of a blocking of dollar deposits, in which dollars could be of less value (to foreigners) than their present equivalent in gold. Gold, however, can very readily become less valuable than its present dollar equivalent. Foreign countries, therefore, whether or not they are under pressure, are likely to turn their gold accumulations into dollars and leave us with still more plethoric hoards of gold than we now have.

If Germany emerges as a (partial) victor in the current conflict, but is unable for some reason to seize the South African gold mines, the mark will become the principal medium of international transactions. Countries which are creditors on international account will then accumulate mark balances, rather than gold, just as many countries formerly accumulated sterling balances and many now accumulate dollars instead of gold.

If, however, Germany as a victor *is* able to seize the South African mines, the Germans will be much more interested in maintaining the international use of gold than they now are. But the Germans would want to use it only as a means of payment abroad, especially in this country, and would have no interest in absorbing it themselves. The Germans have well learned the lesson that one does not make bombs or bullets out of gold, and that, at least for *their* purposes, steel and such like commodities are of infinitely more significance than gold. They would, therefore, continue to buy these commodities, in exchange for otherwise useless gold, so long as they could find a good market for the metal. If we should then be so foolish as to continue to take gold in exchange for goods, we should be arming Germany and disarming ourselves as "preparation" for the inevitable conflict with that country.

Gold in international transactions has never been more than a claim to goods—a kind of poker chips—and he is an imbecile poker player who buys, with assets which will be turned against him, chips that he can never pass back to the other players.

If Britain should win the present conflict, the status of gold would probably be not greatly different from what it was immediately before the hostilities began. There is not likely to be any country except our own which would then feel that it could afford the cost of obtaining, and holding, gold on any large scale, especially now that nearly all countries have learned to dispense with it for all but very minor uses in the arts. Such gold as is produced will therefore, in all probability, continue to come to us and a counter-movement is all but out of the question.

Most bankers, and a good many reputable though not *necessarily* respectable economists, are still blinded by traditions about gold and cannot bring themselves to realize that the world has greatly changed since the time of Ricardo and John Stuart Mill. It is highly doubtful, however, whether either of those great men would have permitted the gold scales to grow over their eyes as they have over those of their followers. Neither was averse to reform or to the assumption of such risk as goes with all reform (frequently less than the risk of inaction). The principal reliance of the gold reactionaries is the expectation—one might almost say the hope—of such abuses in the management of non-metallic standards as will lead to breakdown. Their counsels, obviously, are counsels of despair. Monetary management is essential to a modern economy and there is no more reason to assume ineptitude in the management of a non-metallic standard than in the management of a standard "based on" gold. The adoption of a true gold standard in this country would involve us in a very great inflation.

There is not a great deal that we can now do to use our gold advantageously. We shall simply have to swallow most of it. The suggestion that we put it in circulation would do no particular harm except in so far as its all but inevitable return to the banks would increase our already dangerous excess of bank reserves. But it could not do much good either. Such amounts as stayed in circulation or in hoards, unless the latter were increased in the fear, or reality, of inflation (to which the release of gold might contribute) would be insignificant. Another proposal, that the government lend the gold to foreign nations, neglects the facts that most of our gold is not the unencumbered property of the government but has a lien against it, in the form of gold certificates held by the Reserve Banks, and that, if the gold *were* lent abroad, it would almost certainly be sent back to us in payment for goods. We should then find ourselves with still greater inflammation in our bank reserves as the sole result of a complicated method of giving goods away. This is what we did in the twenties with foreign loans. It would seem that we might have learned enough not to repeat that folly.

If we want to give goods away, we might as well do it simply, avoid the unfavorable repercussions of doing it in complex fashion, and at least get some recognition for a (perhaps) generously inspired act.

The most advantageous use that we can make of our gold is probably to preserve its present value. This might be done by the maintenance of our present policy, along with the accumulation of *commodity* reserves which would be accepted by the monetary authorities, as an alternative to gold, in composite units at a fixed price. Redemption of our money could then be provided, *at the option of the holder*, either in gold or in

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the composite of commodities. This would have the following advantages:

1. It would establish a stable price level for the composite of commodities used as reserves;

2. It would greatly stimulate enterprise, in the production of all of the reserve commodities, whenever depression threatened or was present, just as the production of gold is now stimulated in depressions. There would be an unlimited market for such goods just as there is now an unlimited market for gold;

3. It would prevent the occurrence of any inflation, inasmuch as any price rise, consequent upon the purchase of the "reserve" with new money, would lead to the redemption of money, at the fixed price, in the reserve commodities and thus reduce the money supply to a point merely adequate to the maintenance of the existing price level;

4. It would enable the government, without any cost to itself, to build up stocks of commodities which would be of great use in any war that might occur;

5. It would preserve the value of gold, and increase its usefulness in international transactions as a liquid claim to the goods in the reserve, since these goods could always be obtained at a fixed price for the composite unit in exchange for gold.

Under this system, as under the present, the Reserve Board should be given power to increase the reserves required of member banks above the present maximum.

By these means we might distribute part of our gold around the world in exchange for goods. We should always remember that it is only by so doing that the gold can possibly be of any use to us except as (rather cheap) teaspoons, babies' rattles and trifles of a similar sort. More important, however, we should be establishing a much better monetary standard than gold can ever provide and our reserves would be largely composed of goods with a real, rather than a purely factitious value, and therefore highly useful in emergency situations.

Gold now has value to other nations solely because we stand ready to buy it freely at a preëstablished price; it can have no such value to us, since other nations make no such offer.

FRANK D. GRAHAM

Congress Gets Its Pound of Flesh

PURSUANT to action taken by Congress, the Technical Service, or, as formerly known, the Economics Division of the National Labor Relations Board, was abolished and, "because of disagreement in the Board as to transfer of staff members," Chief Economist David J. Saposs, and the ten remaining members of his professional staff got the axe. Thus was written *finis* to a project which played a highly significant role in virtually revolutionizing industrial relations in the United States.

Although pressure for the abolition of this division extended over a period of more than two years, starting with Senator Burke and the Dies Committee, and despite frequent reference to the subject in the press, the real facts concerning both the achievements and tribulations of this tiny craft in a stormy sea are scarcely known. The facts are important because they are inextricably interwoven with new departures in governmental concern with and intervention in labor relations.

In the labor cases before the federal courts, economic data were yanked out of cloistered classrooms and dusty bookcovers, and boldly injected into hearings and briefs of the National Labor Relations Board. Instead of pleading on purely legalistic grounds as decided by case so-and-so, in court Whosis, the Board, through its Economics Division, brought in evidence in terms of human values, in language so real, and so respectably substantiated by recognized economists, that decision after decision was rendered in the Board's favor. The courts treated the economic evidence with utmost seriousness and frequently quoted from it.

Whether the case rested upon jurisdiction, discrimination, unfair labor practices of many varieties or the more positive question as to what an employer should do to effectuate collective bargaining, economic data played an increasingly prominent role in it. Many of the practices complained of were of a subtle character and required study and analysis by people who, like Dr. Saposs and his aides, were familiar with a wide range of business and labor economics as well as with the history of the relationship between the two. By training, experience and temperament David Saposs was peculiarly fitted for this task. As collaborator with John R. Commons of the University of Wisconsin in the writing of a labor history and in further extensive research in labor and economic theory; as teacher, writer and investigator of subjects directly related to labor relations and collective bargaining, he was better suited than most of his contemporaries to pioneer in this effort of exposing America's judiciary to economic thought and vital economic problems.

His path was not an easy one. Because of the novel nature of the work, and because of the inclination of the Board itself toward a purely legal approach, the Economic Division was forced all along to operate on a very small budget. This meant a limited staff. It meant, too, a staff of young, inexperienced people who had to be trained, and who engaged in this work at pay scarcely above that given to clerks and stenogra-

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phers only because they loved their work and were devoted to their chief.

Supplying economic data was only one of the Division's many functions. Other duties and activities included compilation of statistical data for the annual reports, analysis of payroll records to determine discriminatory discharge, computation of back pay, working out of methods for reinstating discharged employees, ascertainment of employers' ability to meet back pay and many lesser services.

The fight to abolish the Division sprang in the first instance from the apparent fact that it had done its work so well. Short of repealing the act itself, doing away with this important arm of the Board was a considerable victory for those who oppose collective bargaining and for the Congressmen who respond to their pressure. To achieve this end, the abolitionists resorted to the very subtlety in unfair practices that the economics staff was so apt in discerning. One of these steps was to personalize the fight by smearing Dr. Saposs as a Communist. The absurdity of this charge was testified to by educators, writers, labor leaders and almost everyone who has ever been associated with him. In the end, even the Smith Committee chairman and counsel, as well as some of the stanchest opposition Congressmen, exonerated him on the record. By that time, however, Congress had gone out on a limb so far that it insisted upon its way—and got it.

After considerable pressure, Congress reversed its original stand and allowed the Board to carry on the Economics Division's functions but without the Division. This is about as useful as allowing a runner to participate in a race after tying his legs. The chief effectiveness of the Division was attributable to the fact that it was an independent body, responsible only to the Board. Any attempt to carry on the work by assigning an economist here and there to work under the legal or secretarial staff will reduce the experts to the status of clerks and flunkies with about as much effectiveness as the company unions which the Act has outlawed and the Board has spent so much energy in combating.

If the Board, upon having a third member appointed, aims to function, and if the elected President concurs in this aim, both will have to take a more courageous stand than heretofore. They will have to approach Congress frankly and fearlessly with the need of a department, by whatever name, to carry on the tasks performed until now by the Economics Division, and to seek adequate appropriations for it. To give in on this point is tantamount to accepting limb-by-limb destruction of the Act. The Board and the President ought to object also to making Dr. Saposs the scapegoat of prejudice and stupidity. Unless and until this is done, those who fought the Act will have lost the battle but won the war.

ROSE M. STEIN

Bombed in Convoy

We sailed from London in the Clyde Bank, a 7,000-ton freighter about 250 feet long, Captain Nelson. On that day, July 2, we expected to make New York in a fortnight. It was actually nine weeks before we came up the harbor. Six of the nine weeks had been spent in the English Channel, and in that time, by day or by night, we were bombed thirty or more times.

We entered the Channel in convoy, of course, and had got into the Dover Straits. I was working on the boat-deck that morning.

"Look at them," my watch-mate called, and there, over the distant French coast, were three black specks coming toward the head of our convoy and getting larger. It was the first time we had seen a Stuka dive bomber, and they still seemed so remote that when they dived on a tanker about a mile ahead of us and missed her on both sides, sending up great useless fountains of water, we were able to laugh. The planes were in range of the shore batteries, which opened up a heavy fire, chasing two away and bringing down the third in flames. And when the pilot got clear and his parachute opened white like a shellburst in the air, we were able to spare a cheer for him.

But on July 12, off the Channel Islands (the course of the convoy was hesitant and irregular), it began in earnest, and there was little cheering. Early in the afternoon watch some planes came out and went at several of the ships near us, doing some damage but not sinking anything. At three o'clock we saw three, then four, then ten of them coming leisurely out of a high gray bank of clouds over us, and then it was impossible to count them. The official estimate was fifty. They took their time picking out a target, circling around in squadrons and apparently arranging who was going to take what.

We had a rather absurd four-inch submarine gun. It was deadly enough, but it would only elevate to 45 degrees, and we had to get a plane a long way off before we could do anything about it. Anyhow, we picked a squadron of seven planes and got six brave rounds out. Then suddenly we dived for cover, all of us trying to get through the booby-hatch at once. Attracted by our fire, or insulted by it, four planes had got directly over us and were diving together. The roar as they came down was terrific—they seemed to pull out about ten feet above the stack. Then they were gone and there was the roar of an explosion as their cargo of bombs

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went off all around us. There were no direct hits, but the cabins were upset from one end of the ship to the other, and the monkey-island, a concrete slab on top of the bridge, was cracked and tilted sideways.

We were still flat on our bellies in the seamen's quarters when we heard the unmistakable roar of another group diving. I remember lying there and waiting, and seeing a brown arm just ahead of me. The hand was clenched on a stanchion, and the arm had a tattoo above the elbow. A laurel and harp in blue, I remember, with the word Mother. The air seemed too heavy to breathe. Then there was the mounting roar as the planes pulled out, and this time they hit. The explosion lifted us clear of the deck and the ship seemed to go to pieces.

Gradually we found we were still there and afloat, and then it started all over again, this time with fewer planes. And this time they weren't bombing. One swooped so low as it turned that we could hear the machine-gun bullets spattering the length of the alleys below the lifeboats. The other riddled lifeboats, bridge and poop with a great splintering of wood. The gun layer, watching from the booby-hatch, looked right into the pilot's face and ducked. The bullet he pulled out of the steel plate where his head had just been had gone in five-eighths of an inch and still retained its point. Then the planes were gone. The only casualty had been a pair of dungarees drying on the line. They were all shot through.

When we came out and looked around we found the state of our luck: the bomb had hit square on the bridge, which looked as though it would collapse, with the monkey-island in ruins, the foundations cracked and the compass lifted clean out of its gimbals and smashed against a bulkhead. But the bomb had glanced off the monkey-island and exploded in the water.

Up ahead the bombers were still busy, but even as we watched them we heard one of the most welcome roars in the catalogue of sound as twelve British fighters came out of the clouds and tore into those Stukas, wheeling and blazing all around them. Even before they could cut for home we counted eleven Germans plunging into the sea.

The ship began to list. The concussions had strained her plates and she was making water fast—three feet already in the number-four hold, the carpenter said. All hands rushed below with buckets of cement, and we got the leak stopped. Then the engines broke down.

We got the engines together somehow, and then the distributor broke and the dynamos failed. We got them going too, and finally limped into Portland. And Portland wasn't any better than any place else. It was worse. Lying there at anchor in the open harbor we were bombed twenty-three times in twelve days. We kept count. The Greek ship alongside us got a direct hit, and lost seven of her crew (everybody stayed out on deck now, to watch the action). The strain was telling: one of the seamen got into the bad habit of shouting "Bombers!" every time he saw a gull. The cook and a fireman had to be put ashore, "suffering from nervous strain."

The one heartening thing, and the only reason we weren't all blasted out of the water, was the way the RAF boys would come ripping into our attackers almost as soon as the sirens started on shore. It made your blood race just to see the skill and daring of these pilots as they outflew and outmaneuvered bombers or fighters or anything that came along, hell on wings. In those twelve days the RAF lost one plane, and that from the stupid gunfire of one of the ships in our own convoy. I counted more than twenty German planes in the water in the course of those afternoon dogfights, let alone how many staggered home on one wing.

Then one moonlight night, with the Channel swarming with German E-boats, the little torpedo craft, we started the eighty miles to Southampton. Ahead of our convoy, we were ordered to lie-to somewhere off the Isle of Wight, near enough so we could hear the air-raid sirens on the beach. The gun crew stood by all night, but my worst fifteen minutes of the whole cruise came with the second air-raid alarm at 6:45 on the morning watch. No one knew what would come out of the low clouds. I was on look-out outside the wheelhouse and I had to stay there. And when they come at a ship, the bridge is their target. They didn't come.

We picked up a passenger in Southampton and then picked out another moonlight night to go back to Portland. It wasn't watch-and-watch any more; it was watch all the time. We got to Portland in time for a mass raid there, of course, and somehow got off again unharmed. In the three raids that followed as we lay there, the ship next to us—this time a Panamanian—was struck again.

We didn't know by this time whether we'd rather be hit or not, because the lack of sleep, the constant nagging roar of bombers and the anticipation of more to come had our nerves like rope-ends. We were three more nights in the Channel, and still no sleep, and then we were free of the Channel and could hardly believe it. There was another night in a Welsh port, which we left with its oil-tanks blazing down under the horizon as the morning came up, and after that it was only the torpedoes.

Our luck held with them too. Eight ships in our immediate vicinity were sunk, one only fourteen miles away, but the Clyde Bank pushed and thumped along; and then we were in safe waters getting some sleep back; and then we were coming up New York Harbor.

It was morning, and my first view of the Manhattan skyline. I think I never saw anything more beautiful.

A. B. SEAMAN

[*The names in this article have been changed at the author's request.*—THE EDITORS]

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The Making of Mamma Harris

She was a scrawny hardbitten little woman and she greeted me with that politely blank stare which Negroes often reserve for hostile whites or prying members of their own race.

I had been directed to her tenement in Richmond's ramshackle Negro section by another woman, a gray-haired old grandmother whose gnarled hands had been stemming tobacco for five decades.

"The white folks down at union headquarters is all right," she had said, "and we love 'em—especially Mr. Marks. But if you want to know about us stemmers and the rumpus we raised, you better go see Mamma Harris. She's Missus CIO in Richmond."

The blank look softened on the thin dark face when I mentioned this.

"Must've been Sister Jones," she said, still standing near the door. "They all call me Mamma though. Even if I ain't but forty-nine and most of 'em old enough to be my grandmammy."

I edged toward a rocking chair on the other side of the bed.

"I'm a CIO man myself," I remarked. "Newspaper Guild. Our local boys just fixed up The Times-Dispatch this morning."

She yelled so suddenly that I almost missed the rocker.

"Bennie!" she called toward the kitchen, "you hear that, Bennie? CIO's done organized The Dispatch. Moved right in this morning. What I tell you? We gonna make this a union town yet!"

A hulking overalled Negro appeared in the kitchen doorway. His booming bass voice heightened his startling resemblance to Paul Robeson.

"Dispatch?" he thundered. "God Amighty, we do come on."

Mrs. Harris nodded in my direction.

"He's a CIO man from up New York. Wants to know about our rumpus out at Export. He's a Guilder too, just like the white 'uns."

Benny limped toward the other chair.

"They give us hell," he said, "but we give it right back to 'em. And it was we'uns who come out on top. The cops was salty. Wouldn't even let us set down and rest. But I told the women, I told 'em 'Sit down' and they did. Right in front of the cops too. Didn't I, Louise?"

Mrs. Harris nodded energetically from her perch on the bed.

"You dead did. And they didn't do nothing neither. They 'fraid of the women. You can outtalk the men. But us women don't take no tea for the fever."

Bennie boomed agreement. "There was five hundred of the women on the picket line and only twenty of us mens. But we sure give 'em hell. I talked right up to them cops, didn't I, Louise? Didn't I?"

Finally Mrs. Harris got around to the beginning.

"I wasn't no regular stemmer at first," she said, "but I been bringing a shift somewhere or other since I was eight. I was took out of school then and give a job minding chillun. By the time I was ten I was cooking for a family of six. And I been scuffling ever since.

"But I don't work in no factory till eight years ago. Then I went out to Export. Well, it took me just one day to find out that preachers don't know nothing about hell. They ain't worked in no tobacco factory."

Bennie was smiling to himself and gazing at the ceiling.

"Them cops beat up them strikers something awful out at Vaughn's," he said. "They even kicked the women around. But they didn't do it to us, huh, Louise? We stood right up to 'em."

Mrs. Harris waved aside the interruption.

"Then there was this scab," she went on, "only he ain't no scab then, cause we don't have no union. We ain't even heerd of no union nowhere then, but I knew something was bound to happen. Even a dog couldn't keep on like we was. You know what I make then? Two dollars and eighty cents a week. Five dollars was a too bad week."

"I put in eighty-two and a half hours one week," Bennie said, "and they only give me $18.25. I think about this one day when one of them cops . . ."

Mrs. Harris shushed him.

"Now this scab—only he ain't no scab then—he rides me from the minute I get to Export. He's in solid with the man and he always brag he's the ringtail monkey in this circus. He's a stemmer like the rest of us but he stools for the white folks.

"There's two hundred of us on our floor alone and they only give us four and a half and five cents a pound. We don't get paid for the tobacco leaf, you know. You only get paid for the stems. And some of them stems is so puny they look like horse hair."

Bennie was chuckling softly to himself but a glance from Mrs. Harris held the cops at bay for the moment.

"And as if everything else wasn't bad enough, there was this scab. We's cramped up on them benches from kin to can't, and he's always snooping around to see nobody don't pull the stem out the center instead of pulling the leaf down both sides separate. This dust just eats your lungs right out you. You start dying the day you go in."

She coughed automatically and continued.

"Well, I keep this up for six long years. And this scab is riding me ever' single day. He's always riding

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everybody and snitching on them what don't take it. He jump me one day about singing. Course, a stemmer's bench ain't no place for singing and I ain't got no voice nohow. But I like a song and I gotta do something to ease my mind or else I go crazy.

"But he jump me this morning and tell me to shut up. Well, that's my cup. Six years is six years, but this once is too often. So I'm all over him like gravy over rice. I give him a tongue-lashing what curled every nap on his head."

For a moment she had the same beaming look which Bennie displayed when he spoke of the cops.

"I sass him deaf, dumb and blind, and he takes it. But all the time he's looking at me kinder queer. And all at once he says 'You mighty salty all of a sudden; you must be joining up with this union foolishness going on around here.'

"You coulda knocked me over with a Export stem. I ain't even heard nothing about no union. But as soon as he cuts out, I start asking around. And bless my soul if they ain't been organizing for a whole full week. And I ain't heerd a peep."

"I ain't heerd nothing neither then," Benny put in, "and I been there fifteen years."

Mrs. Harris caught another breath.

"Well, I don't only go to the next meeting downtown, but I carries sixty of the girls from our floor. They remember how I sass this scab and they're all with me. We plopped right down in the first row of the gallery. And when they asked for volunteers to organize Export, I can't get to my feet quick enough."

"I come in right after," Bennie remarked.

"And it ain't no time," Mrs. Harris continued, "before we got seven hundred out of the thousand what works in Export. The man is going crazy mad and the scab is snooping overtime. But they can't fire us. The boom time is on and the warehouse is loaded to the gills."

She paused dramatically.

"And then on the first of August, 1938, we let 'em have it. We called our strike and closed up Export tight as a bass drum."

Bennie couldn't be shushed this time.

"The cops swooped down like ducks on a June bug," he said, "but we was ready for 'em. I was picket captain and there was five hundred on the line. And all five hundred was black and evil."

Mrs. Harris was beaming again.

"Then this scab came up with a couple hundred others and tried to break our line," she recalled, "but we wasn't giving a crip a crutch or a dog a bone. I made for that head scab personal—but the cops wouldn't let me at 'im."

"I stayed on the line for twenty-four hours running," Bennie chuckled, "and I didn't take a inch from none of them cops."

"And we wasn't by ourselves neither," Mrs. Harris went on. "The preachers, Dr. Jackson, the Southern Aid Society and all the other union people help us. GWU and them garment ladies give us a hundred dollars right off the bat. Malgamate sent fifty. The ship folks down in Norfolk come through, and your white Guild boys here give ten dollars too."

"It was them white garment ladies what sent the cops," Bennie cut in. "They come out five hundred strong and parade around the factory. They got signs saying 'GWU Supports Export Tobacco Workers.'

"Them cops jump salty as hell. '*White* women,' they say, '*white* women out here parading for niggers.' But they don't do nothing. Because we ain't taking no stuff from nobody."

"We was out eighteen days," Mrs. Harris said, "and the boss was losing money hand over fist. But you know how much we spend in them eighteen days? Over seven hundred dollars."

Her awed tones made it sound like seven thousand.

"But it was worth it. We win out and go back getting ten, eleven and twelve cents a pound. And better still we can wear our union buttons right out open. We might even have got them scabs fired if we wanted, but we didn't want to keep nobody out of work."

Bennie stopped smiling for the first time.

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"We might be better off if we did," he said soberly. "I bet we do next time."

Mrs. Harris explained.

"They been sniping away at us ever since we win. They give the scabs all the breaks and lay off us union people first whenever they can. They give all the overtime to the scabs and even let 'em get away with stripping the stem down the center. But we ain't licked yet. We still got two hundred members left and we still got union conditions."

Her face brightened again.

"And we fixed that old scab—even if he is been there nineteen years. We moved him off our floor completely, and he ain't allowed to ride nobody.

"We got a good set of people downtown now and we're reorganizing right along. By the time our new contract comes up in June, we'll probably have the whole thousand."

"And if we strike again, and them cops jump salty" —Bennie began.

And this time Mamma Harris let him pursue the subject to his heart's content.

TED POSTON

Discovering Tuesday

I

Everybody is somebody.

Look! look!—but don't look now—
That's Mrs. Whoses, holding roses,
And Mr. O-You-Know;
A friend shall introduce us,
Without excuses. Look!
(Even the waiter, one supposes,
Is an expatriate duke).

If anybody be nobody,
He had better leave, while he can,
For they've hired a man
  to spy on the man
    who shadows The Man.

Not everywhere time gooses chance,
Direction trips on circumstance,
You find yourself in the same room
With you-know-who disguised as whom.

BUT WHO'S THAT MAN STANDING IN THE DOOR?

Half lights and fiddles,
Atmosphere galore.

II

Don't look now, but—
  WHO'S THAT MAN?—
Pink and pert and perched at the bar,
  Cute with consumption,
  Sexless as saucers,
  Celebs and Debs,
  The sons and daughters
Of those who do, or simply *are:*

Bernard, the famous bathroom bard,
Actor Hector, breathing hard,
The bishop's bastard son, who drinks,
The home-town girl who got made good,
The champion of tiddlywinks;
They have arrived, announced by God—
A small boy
  shouting naughty words
    in a strange neighborhood.

BUT WHO'S THAT MAN, AND WHAT'S THE MATTER?

Don't look now—I'll tell you later.

III

Take any Tuesday afternoon,
Remarkable for nothing else,
You'll find them here, drinking beer,
Celebrating themselves:

The folk it *really* pays to know,
Butcher, baker, cannon maker,
International undertaker,
Cock Robber and Jim Crow.
Isn't it sweet? isn't it neat?
Isn't it just too too romantic?
(Even the potted palms are authentic.)

You don't just come, you've got to be brought.
A pearl is but a pimple, that's the point.
You either pay, or you get bought;
"This ain't no tables-for-ladies joint."

Let's dance—the orchestra is playing.
WHO'S THAT MAN, AND WHAT'S HE SAYING?

IV

Dance! my pretty quacks and clowns,
Damn you, dance! spin and pass—
But hold your breath, and don't look down!
You're dancing on a floor of glass.

(It's too late for apologies,
Too late already to abscond,
Too late to have a single bond
Transferred to foreign securities.)

Assume the supercilious pose
And dance! until the crystal cracks
From under you, from over those
Who hold this floor upon their backs;

You'll dance, and keep it up, by God!
Till roof and sky and system fall,
And subterrestrial storms explode,
And ding-dong death has drowned you all.

HOWARD NUTT

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Washington Notes

Nonconformist Welshman

MR. JOHN L. LEWIS' SPEECH in support of Mr. Willkie on October 25 followed an interval of intense negotiation. From the last week of September onwards, the most influential figures of the New Deal and the CIO begged, prayed and implored Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Lewis to make peace. Most of the pressure, as nearly as I can find out, was on Mr. Roosevelt. Would he give in to Mr. Lewis' demands that munitions contracts be withheld from corporations violating the Wagner Act? Ten days before Mr. Lewis' speech, the two men met in the White House offices. Mr. Roosevelt had just then beat a prudent retreat on the NDAC contracts issue, and his retreat lay across the conference like a marsh fog. There is good reason to believe that Mr. Lewis received a buttering-up, and little else.

The anger against Mr. Lewis within the New Deal group is now very great. Perhaps the kindest thing said about him is that he has gone crazy. Mr. Lewis has made no effort to explain or justify himself. However, if I understand some of his subordinates correctly, the fundamental motives that impelled him to do what he did are somewhat different than—or at least were obscured by—the rolling periods of his speech. In my opinion, they merit a hearing.

For brevity's sake, let me telescope what they say into my own phrases. The fact of the matter is that the organized labor movement now has two leaders—leaders, that is, in the sense that Mr. Gompers was a leader. They are Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Lewis. Of the two, Mr. Roosevelt has greater influence and prestige among the union rank and file. This is true not only in the railroad brotherhoods and the AFL, but in the CIO as well, as recent state CIO conventions have demonstrated.

Now if, for a moment, Mr. Lewis' undeniable vanity be set aside—though anyone who knows him knows that it cannot be set aside in a matter involving power—is this a good thing? I am bound to say that I do not think this is a simple question, to be disposed of off-hand. Is it a good thing that the primary allegiance of union members should be placed in a politician—or statesman, if you prefer—rather than in one of their own brothers, whose salary they pay?

Hidden away somewhere here is the greater problem of whether American workers have more to hope for from economic action—collective bargaining and strikes—than from political action. Naturally enough, at the moment New Dealers are heavily stressing the undoubted benefits that Mr. Roosevelt has brought to labor, the NLRB, the Walsh-Healey Act, the wages-and-hours law. I suppose it will be generally agreed that the two most valuable forward steps that labor has made since 1933 have been the steel and automobile agreements. The first was brought about by Mr. Lewis single-handed in negotiation with Mr. Myron C. Taylor: the most that can be claimed for the New Deal's labor laws is that they provided a favorable climate of opinion. The second—the automobile agreement—was achieved partly by the spontaneous sitdown strikes of the rank-and-filers and partly by Mr. Lewis' wily, desperate, pugnacious leadership. Here the administration, because of Mr. Roosevelt's extreme indecisiveness, was a downright hindrance. In contrast, how have the National Labor Relations Act and the Walsh-Healey Act fared with the two big jobs they were supposed to do: the secondary steel companies and Ford Motors? Bethlehem Steel and Ford continue to intimidate union organizers, while participating cheerfully in arms contracts.

This balancing of the respective services of Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Lewis is a wholly unhappy and ungrateful business, and not altogether fair. As suggested, the pro-labor climate of opinion engendered by the New Deal ought not to be ignored. Yet there are two points about the New Deal climate of opinion that must be made. The first is that any political group taking power after the Hoover depression was bound to have been at least superficially liberal. It is a bold person who would say that, no matter who was President in 1933-36, Mr. Lewis could not have led labor to great advances.

The second is that a climate of opinion is not composed exclusively of soft words. The greatest single blow to unionism in the nineteen thirties was the violent business slump of 1937-38. Rightly or wrongly, Mr. Lewis' partisans gave Mr. Roosevelt a large share of responsibility for it. It stopped the CIO's greatest organizing campaign in mid-career. It was the obvious cause of the weakness and quarreling of the labor movement in the period since then.

What has all this to do with the election campaign? The quickest way to describe what is in the minds of the Lewis partisans is to suppose that Mr. Roosevelt is reëlected, and that subsequently—say, on the issue of organizing Bethlehem—he takes a run-out powder. And suppose he does it amid a sunburst of words about not impeding national defense. How are union leaders to rally the rank-and-filers to stand for their rights? The rank-and-filers look on Mr. Roosevelt as a semi-god. Apart from Mr. Lewis, most CIO leaders have taught them to regard him thus.

I should be grossly misrepresenting the Lewis partisans if I implied that they thought this election presented easy alternatives. The CIO has an amazing volunteer intelligence system. Its leaders have no illusions about Mr. Willkie or his backers. They would rather see Mr. Roosevelt as President. But what frightens them is that the labor movement may become an appendage of a Roosevelt political party. The primary need is to preserve the labor movement as a separate, independent entity under its own leaders. If Mr. Willkie were President, there would be no confusion about whether he or John L. Lewis spoke for organized labor. There would be no difficulty in rallying labor against Mr. Willkie.

I have put these arguments a great deal more crudely than the Lewis partisans do. They do not admit that there is a struggle for power within the unions between Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Lewis. But that is what it comes to. The Walsh-Healey Act row nakedly illuminated this. The issue was: shall organized labor insist on the faithful enforcement of a federal statute—Mr. Lewis' position—or shall it defer its demands in the interest of Mr. Roosevelt's political fortunes? I think this is a problem about which men can honestly disagree. And before you heatedly say that there can be no excuse for not wholeheartedly supporting

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Mr. Roosevelt, I beg you to remember that British unionists were once asked to waive their rights to advance the political fortunes of an individual, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald.

According to the New Dealers, Mr. Lewis has been offered the secretaryship of Labor by Mr. Willkie. Throughout the campaign, Mr. Willkie seems to have followed an invariable pattern in making promises; probably the truth is slightly different. If Mr. Willkie kept to this pattern, he told Mr. Lewis that he'd like to have him, or a CIO nominee, for the job. But he would have added that he was bound to consult other interested groups—in this case, the AFL and the Railroad Brotherhoods. However, he would promise Mr. Lewis that he would have a plenary veto over the appointment, that no one unsatisfactory to Mr. Lewis would be named. This is a very old formula in politics, and a very adroit one.

Washington T. R. B.

Other People's Money

War and Business

THE STOCK MARKET simply cannot make up its mind what is going to happen to business—no matter who is elected President. It cannot make up its mind about two things. First, if the war should end suddenly with a British collapse, what will be the effect on our own industry, which is now chiefly defense industry? Will the government take advantage of this event to speed up defense, defense borrowing and spending? It is aware of the fact that the German government may attempt to play a card against this by making a peace with England which will take the wind out of the sails of the war party in America. This would be good strategy. How much energy would be left in a huge defense-borrowing program if the war actually came to an end, the tension lessened, British propaganda died out and the propaganda necessities of the election ended? Speculators are unable to make up their minds about this.

The other point is the election and the domestic situation. What will Willkie do—what, indeed, can he do if elected—to bring about a business revival that may be preceded by a business decline first? Will he keep up spending sufficiently to cushion the shift to some other policy? All of these questions cannot possibly be answered. And hence the stock market hesitates on the edge of spurting up because it cannot weigh the numerous human elements in the equation. What will happen to business seems to have come down to a question of choices that a few men may make.

There is a widespread feeling—what it is founded on I do not know—that Britain and Germany will end hostilities this winter some time. If this should prove true, my own feeling is that this government will promptly take over as much of Britain's contracts with American manufacturers as possible and raise the wind for a still greater defense program. But I believe that this will peter out after a while and that it will be succeeded by a grave decline. This is no matter who is elected. And it does not look like a picnic for the man who goes into the White House. After that decline—if it is properly handled, if there is a good swift shaking out—we might well see a slowly gathering flight off into a period of very active business, if not a boom.

If the war does not end, we shall continue to spend and spend. And the time is close at hand when we shall face a grievous tax problem. We do not know what taxes are like yet. The latest news from England is that, having literally exhausted the possibilities of income taxes, the British have now gone in for the most drastic sales tax ever known—33 percent. There isn't much left to spend after the tax-collector gets through with a moderate-sized income now in England. We shall not go that far for a long time and unless we actually get into war. But we are going to see an era of heavy taxes of all kinds and the first raids are going to be on the middle-class incomes.

Reports come in from various spots around the country that are of interest. One is that the various price structures artificially maintained by manufacturing groups have more or less broken down. Producers of things like typewriters, refrigerators, various household facilities and utilities have either been actually accused or suspected of operating under price agreements that kept prices up and checked sales. Also, manufacturers of other articles, who have been insisting on the price-maintenance privilege, have been relaxing that practice heavily. The reason for this is not made clear, save perhaps that producers are getting hungry for business which is available in a competitive price market. A bulletin from the Labor Department in Washington seems to confirm this tendency and speaks about a "return to competition by price." The possibilities of increased business in this are very great. But none of these things can lift from the future the impenetrable fog created by the war.

Here is a precious item of news from that great metropolis of Light and Learning—Chicago. One of the dark spots in that town is the school board. And the bright, particular star of that outfit is Superintendent William H. Johnson, whose scalp teachers and school organizations have been hunting ever since the Kelly-Nash machine put him into power.

Superintendent Johnson has set the teachers and principals of the schools to work censoring the books that the kiddies will be exposed to. He has started a sort of textbook spy hunt. Even such old standbys as "Robinson Crusoe" and "The Swiss Family Robinson" and "Grimm's Fairy Tales" are being searched for evidence of work by long deceased fifth-columnists. Even arithmetic is not being overlooked, to be certain that no subversive philosophy lurks in the "examples." Magazines like Child Life and American Boy are being combed through for evidence of the hated enemy of the American Way.

There will, of course, be much more of this. In New York after the last war poor old Mayor Hylan, of sainted memory, had his great literary expert, Davy Hirschfield, rake through our histories to detect the yarns planted there by King George and his minions to lay the groundwork for bringing America within the British Empire. It was a gallant adventure. And it looks as if it fell very far short of succeeding. However, we have lit the fires here. We may now watch them spread. JOHN T. FLYNN

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The Snail's on the Thorn

Charley's Aunt, by Brandon Thomas. Cort Theatre, October 17, 1940.
George Washington Slept Here, by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart. Lyceum Theatre, October 19, 1940.
Big White Fog, by Theodore Ward. Lincoln Theatre, October 22, 1940.

IT IS ALMOST NOVEMBER and there are only eight plays running on Broadway. One of the two latest is a revival of the old farce about Charley's aunt that long ago went round the world. The experiment is interesting as, shall we say, theatre esthetics. It was in the first place evolved at the Mt. Kisco Theatre, under the management of Mr. Skinner and Mr. Tuttle, for an audience far above the average in taste and quality. Mr. José Ferrer played the well worn lead. Mr. Joshua Logan was the director.

Audiences still seem to find good reasons for roaring with laughter through much of this old farce, and that's that. The conditions of this summer production were most promising. The two managers are among those—a choice number indeed—who conceive of the theatre with superior aim and distinction. Mr. Ferrer is a gifted actor, with wit. Mr. Logan is, among the rising directors, one with a bold, free hand, fresh and energetic imagination, and a bounding theatre sense. The variety in the kinds of theatre entertainment that he has given a hand to is in itself a good sign. We need just this sort of range and abundance of attack; the very essence of the theatre lies in audacity and plenty and even rashness; the proof of its pudding is ever in the eating, not in the cooking school. Funny or not, et cetera, as we may happen to take it, this revival, or resuscitation, of "Charley's Aunt," the handling of it and the prosperity of its run, make a good study in theatre practice.

"George Washington Slept Here," the play about men's natural and simple desire for a foothold in the country, begins with one of those happy inventions that apparently teem in Mr. George Kaufman's head—I mean the motif implied in the title itself. (It turns out later that Benedict Arnold, not Washington, did the sleeping there, which is also a happy invention in motif.) The general invention and upwelling of the play, however, is not always sure and full by any means. The very multiplicity of themes, situations, trusted hokums, introduced is evidence of that fact. Often during the play the audience finds something laughable, snappy or biting. The human comedy bubbles, the wise-cracking goes far and wide. But some kind of basic, underlying, supporting and illuminating conception and design is lacking. There is no certainty from the playwrights of what we might call the response to the material. This is a pity, for this very genuine Americana deserves to be less emptily exploited.

The whole engagement of this event, directing, mounting and projection, is expert and busy, if slightly arid and unloving. Mr. Ernest Truex brings to the male lead his anxious skill. Miss Jean Dixon, with those swaths she must cut in venom and point, makes us think of that saying of Raphael's about Michelangelo: "This man walks the streets of Rome like an executioner." Mr. Dudley Digges brings to the rather trick character part of the bothersome uncle his impeccable taste and skill—nothing impure, nothing false, nothing that misses fire through sheer lack of craft. He is easily one of the finest half-dozen actors in our theatre; and it is a comment on the state of our drama that no play is written for him as the central character and technical revelation.

Meanwhile, far uptown in Harlem, "Big White Fog" is the first play offered by the Negro Playwrights' Company. It is a propaganda play, with the conclusion, I gather, that communism holds out some sort of solution for the race problem involved. As a whole, this play of Mr. Theodore Ward's is no better than most propaganda plays on Broadway have been so far, and not very much worse. The relation of art to propaganda remains a difficult matter, to be resolved only—and rarely—with some ultimate technical security and spiritual instinct. STARK YOUNG

Less Time for Comedy

THERE WILL BE SOME to whom a systematic four or five-year advance build-up on each picture is going to make "The Great Dictator" a disappointment. That will be too bad, because it is a good picture, and this time something new in Chaplin. There will be others, however, who will find the symbiosis of comedy and earnestness an unhappy state of union, detrimental to both; and I think these people will be right. For the world's first funny man to prove that he too can write a New Republic editorial, but several years late, is something rather less than the dog who walked on his hind legs, because this is the place in the act where he was supposed to do "dead dog."

Through Mr. Chaplin's characteristic reticence you know what the picture is all about, of course. One Charlie is Hitler; the other is a Jewish barber in Hitler's Germany, an amnesia victim left over from the World War. Paulette Goddard is a Waif. Jack Oakie is a Mussolini briefly, and good while he's there. And both Charlies talk. Everybody knows all about these facts because the secret was guarded so hard for so long.

What nobody suspected is that the Hitler Charlie, the new Charlie of authority, double-talk and complete confusion, actually steals the show. This was hardly by design. All the old luggage of slapstick and pathos and after-my-laughter-came-tears is in the ghetto sequences, with people being bonged over the head with a skillet and Chaplin with the stick and that crazy-ballet walk of his and the girl being waifed right and left and the Keystone cops in storm-trooper uniforms piling all over the place.

"The Great Dictator" opens on some pretty dated nonsense in the war zone and the kind of lighting and movie action they used in "Shoulder Arms." What's new is the acting, the new and different character, a mixture of sharp mimicry and the devices of absurdity. And as we might have expected from the wonderful double-talk song in "Modern Times," Chaplin is as acute and perfect verbally as he is in pantomime: he has the splenetic and krauty fustian of the German orator as exactly as Hitler himself. When he says "Democracy shtoonk. Liberty shtoonk," he crowds out over his collar to the precise degree, and he never misses an opportunity to go

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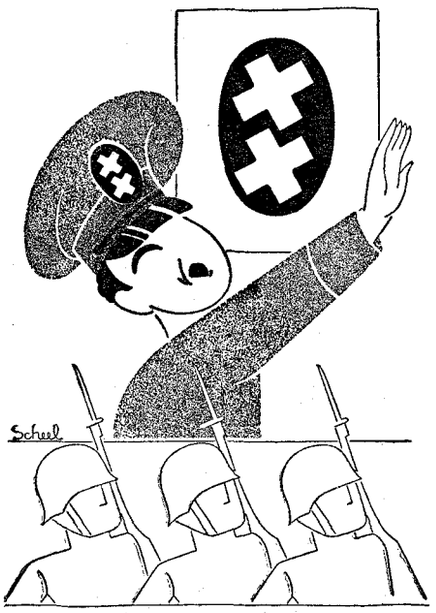
from the normal English of the story into this hortatory gibberish, booting his lieutenants around and scaring the devil out of everybody, including himself. And the old reliable panto at the same time too, so that his version of the Nazi salute is a blend of pomp and monkeyshine that leaves them in the aisles, and his dance with the globe is one of the triumphs of all satiric dancing, for point, grace and perfection.



The whole thing is worked out with a great deal of care for many effects, some of which are on the gag side, some not. The dictator can never quite get a pen out of the patent inkwell to sign documents with, for example; or he gets tied up in his cape, or the train he is meeting stops at the wrong place (this, the arrival of Napolini of Bacteria, is one of the highlights, together with the review of the troops which follows). On the other side there is great business with affairs of state, the dapper and ominous figure whipping around from audience to conference to portrait sitting, half a minute for each. There is a character called Herring (Henry Daniell) and a character called Garbitsch (Billy Gilbert), who is always demonstrating a new and invincible device that doesn't work—as when the parachute inventor takes off and they watch him crash to the sidewalk below: "Far from perfect," the dictator says incisively. The two dictators end up trying to bluff each other, and we go back to the story of Charlie the barber, which has been going on intermittently.

When this is funny it is funny as always, in the shop, on the street, around the chimney pots, with some of the oldest Chaplin favorites still peeping through. But it is also tragic because a people is being persecuted; these Jews are straight characters, not the old cartoons; and the laughter chokes suddenly and is reluctant to start again. Chaplin likes to pull out all the stops on sentimental passages, but this thing is too near and meaningful. It isn't that a comedian should be denied indignation and kept clowning forever; it is that old thing in all art of the demands of unity, of a complete and sustained mood or tone. He was always a funny figure against the rude world, but the gulf between a kick in the pants and a pogrom is something even his talent for the humorous-pathetic will not cross. And his unrelieved six-minute exhortation to the downtrodden of the world, look up, stand up, etc., is not only a bad case of overwriting but dramatically and even inspirationally futile.

These things must be reported, though that other burning question of whether the satire is actually effective, and to what extent, will get small play here. You could remember that the size of policemen's feet was never seriously affected by all the skylarking of the Keystone lot; but you could also remember that a man's heart being in the right place is a good thing to witness, and that laughter is one of the great and joyous healers of the spirit, whatever the recent crop of solemn buffoons have to say about its social waste. And again as always where there is a Chaplin picture, there is laughter here, warmth and grace too. I think it will do you good, just for what is there, let alone that this is still Chaplin the Great, and growing at his age.

A lot of people don't have time enough for comedy these days, and it is getting so you wince every time someone in a film trifle says the word democracy: it means they are going to pull out with a heavy speech. "Arise, My Love" is the latest to capitalize on the situation in Europe. It is the old girl-reporter framework with angles, such as idealism. Mitchell Leisen did another one of his bright comedy jobs through most of it, and got action in too; the dialogue really jumps; there is a nice boy-girl angle; Claudette Colbert, Ray Milland and a well placed cast breeze through it.

But there is that need to milk the headlines, which is not so much a bad thing in itself as a poor excuse for shooting around story complications; and when they start talking with too much feeling and punk poetry about the little fellows in Spain (a safe subject now; when it would have done some good it was too hot to touch), Poland, Norway, France, without really caring a damn or devoting enough of the picture to making it real, it gets embarrassing. This is the story of a condemned Loyalist aviator, pardoned by a ruse, chasing the newspaper career girl to Paris, almost running away home with her and then going back to fly in Poland. It came to a good enough end in about an hour and a half; but twenty minutes later they were still making speeches and all they needed was the American flag in "The Time of Your Life" and a new arrangement of "The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers." You can save time by getting out when it becomes clear that the boat the two are on is the Athenia, by a device heisted from "Cavalcade," though in this instance the lovers don't die—just the picture. Can I help you with your coat? OTIS FERGUSON

The Bandwagon

Immaculate Conception Gridders Down Our Saviour to Lead League.—*Headline of a football story in The Bronx Home News.*

The program, listing Beethoven's Symphony in D major by Sibelius, will be repeated Friday afternoon and the following Sunday afternoon.—*From The New York Post.*

QUICK CASH LOANS: To single or married couples who have a steady income, $20 to $300.—*Advertisement from a firm in Houghton, Michigan.*

They wore their last year's gowns bravely—as if they were making some distinguishable sacrifice in the name of suffering

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humanity. And perhaps for this reason, there were more orchids in evidence than ever before. – *From a description of the opening of the opera season in The San Francisco Chronicle.*

Too Late!

An exotic creature who could breathe sex-appeal into "Mary's Had a Little Lamb." – *From Harold W. Cohen's column in The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.*

It Floats!

"The maneuvers," Kuznetsov said, "have shown that each vessel of the Baltic fleet is capable of naval action." – *Admiral N. G. Kuznetsov, People's Commissar of the Navy, quoted in a Moscow dispatch to The New York Herald Tribune.*

"Mother, May I Go Out to Swim?"

To prepare themselves for visits to New York's low-rent-housing projects, seventeen provisional members of the Junior League of New York made a flight yesterday over the projects. – *From an item in The New York Times.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; $1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. – THE EDITORS

Correspondence

A Letter from England

[The quotations below are from a private letter, written without thought of publication. The New Republic asked permission to publish these extracts because of the picture they give of what is happening in England. – THE EDITORS]

It was interesting to see London again after an interval of three weeks. One's first impression is surprise to see everything so normal—the streets and buildings still there, the trains running almost on time, taxis and buses everywhere and people going about their business. Then one begins to see patches of destruction—a corner gone here, two or three houses demolished there, and entire squares of broken windows. But on the whole, it is like one tooth gone in an otherwise even row of teeth. But in the East End it is a different story altogether. Y—— and I spent an afternoon in the slums, down by the docks, Stepney and Poplar and Mile End, and there the destruction extends for miles—dreadful, empty, gutted houses with only the shell left. Here and there a whole block has gone, just disintegrated into rubble, but the greater part still stands, only dead, like a corpse on its feet. We made our way to the great warehouse of the L.M.S. on the docks where 12,000 people are now sleeping every night. It was a scene unimaginable—human beings lying six rows deep on a concrete floor, whole families with their babies, their food, their bedding, just camping there, so close to one another that one couldn't step between. Some families had even settled into the L.M.S. wagons that were drawn up in a kind of underground street. We talked to a number of people—they all seemed eager to tell their stories and we didn't come across any resentment against the government. Their anger seemed to be vented on Hitler. The men wanted their women and children evacuated, but the women won't go until they can be assured that communal feeding centers and shelters are provided for all the men. It raises a colossal problem for the government, but now, with Morrison in charge, I believe the situation can be met. Before seeing the actual conditions one tended to think it was beyond human endurance and that people couldn't stick it—but now, a new faith is born in me. The challenge is terrific—really desperate, but I believe it can, and will, be met.

The borough councils have been utterly inadequate. I imagine a central authority will be set up. "And what a chance," Y—— said, "for education." There those people sit for hours in underground shelters with nothing to do. "Think of the films that could be shown; the music given; talks, lectures, entertainment." It really is a tremendous opportunity to develop a new kind of communal life. But this aspect of the problem can be all too easily overlooked or else exploited in the wrong way.

Y—— and I also visited the deep shelters in Finsbury. One of the largest, alas, is a failure, because the walls sweat and the dampness is unbearable. But others are very good—a series of underground rooms taking ten people each, with beds made of wooden slats standing in a row. Here people can leave their bedding when they go off to work, whereas in the undergrounds they have to cart it back and forth. We saw the undergrounds too—pretty dreadful and yet not utterly degrading; such conditions still can be borne.

So you see, on the whole London was a great inspiration to me. For several weeks now I've lived with a sense of horror left over from our first experience. People were frightened then and I was frightened too. But now it's different. Somehow they have taken the measure of the situation—they know what to expect, they know that they can adjust their lives to this front-line attack, and there is a new sense of control. Of course, due to the onset of bad weather, the bombing has been less severe and W—— says that there will almost inevitably be a slowing down of raids through the winter. Then there are rumors of new protective devices that are being tried—but, whatever the cause, the destruction has been far less during this past week and people have been getting more hours of sleep. One still hears the planes overhead all night like angry mosquitoes coming and going, but the great guns tend to drown the sound of falling bombs—and you know what a comfort that can be.

Poor C——'s —the silver shop—has gone. I lingered regretfully there thinking of their wonderful stock, so impossible to replace. But perhaps something has been salvaged. Bruton Street has had a bad blow and one corner of Berkeley Square has gone —and Hanover Square badly battered. But so it is everywhere. Kensington seems to have suffered least. Grosvenor Square, mercifully, is still untouched, and so is Brook Street. I packed your clothes to bring back with me but I left B——'s picture behind as an earnest of my faith that the flat would survive. And I believe it will.

W——'s squadron is at ——, and they fly over us here almost every day. He rejoined them last Monday and on the same day he went up three times to intercept raids. He didn't need even one day of practice. Apparently he has forgotten nothing, and flying is really like second nature to him. I'm afraid the squadron will not be long at ——. It is "resting" so called—only defending C——. They have been in the thick of the fighting and will soon go back. But meanwhile it is lovely to have W—— so near. He came over here one evening and took me out to dinner in Torquay. You can't think how absurdly gay I felt! . . . . And the rest of the time I work in the garden. We've planted thousands of primroses along the upper terrace walk, under the rhododendrons, and today I've worked again

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with J—— in the rock garden. It's blessed to have such an opportunity. Sometimes I wonder if I count too much upon it. But when something comes along that offers me physical activity with spiritual creation—well, you know how I grasp it! And of course it's an antidote to the war—it's an attempt to create beauty that can perhaps survive. Perhaps it's even an answer to Shakespeare— "How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea, whose action is no stronger than a flower." Even "against the wrackful siege of battering days" my garden may hold out.
Somewhere in England DOROTHY ELMHIRST

How They Are Voting, Continued

SIR: I shall vote for Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Henry A. Wallace, two men who are aware, concerned, wise and just; two men who have shown themselves by their records to be dedicated to the service of the people, to the end that the welfare of all the people has been bettered and greatly insured.
HELEN GAHAGAN

SIR: I shall vote for Roosevelt because I firmly believe that he is the only candidate who can be relied upon to exert every effort to combat the threatening totalitarianisms of Europe and Asia, and also because in his leadership he has stood out against those forces in this country which place the conservation of profits above the conservation of human beings and which, if given free rein, would rapidly undermine our democracy.
MELVYN DOUGLAS

SIR: Against Hitler, I trust. LINDSAY ROGERS

SIR: I am going to vote for Willkie because (1) after eight years of Roosevelt our internal perils (unemployment and deficit financing) are not less but greater, and (2) the record suggests that, while no less socially conscious than Roosevelt, Willkie is much more likely to lead us toward that basic economic improvement which alone can assure any long-term social betterment (and international security). Also the Chicago Convention and the third term. D. C. POOLE

SIR: Our toughest political assignment appears to be the creation of administration which is democratic from its grass roots up, but is as efficient as the AT and T or the NSDAP. No one else in American administrative history has achieved this difficult goal on so vast a scale as has Henry A. Wallace. That the politicos didn't know this, or didn't care, is to their discredit. Fortunately FDR had noticed and did care. In war-making days, liberals are necessarily deeply concerned to safeguard democracy in process, while defending it as an ideal. So I shall vote against Willkie, whose administrative doings, while doubtless efficient, have never tried to be democratic, and for America's ablest exponent of how to get things done with the growing understanding, consent and participation of all persons concerned—Secretary Wallace. Incidentally, along with Wallace, but with my fingers crossed, I'm taking FDR's improved foreign policy.
GOODWIN WATSON

SIR: Being a resident of the District of Columbia, I have no vote. Being a clergyman, I prefer not to express my preference as between the candidates for the presidency. JOHN A. RYAN

SIR: Willkie's previous record, his unawareness of deep secular trends of American life, his inability to give specific content to his proposals on domestic issues and his thumping failure to achieve leadership of his adopted party eliminate him of course from consideration. Not content to enjoy the luxury of a protest vote, I shall therefore support Roosevelt—with plenty of misgivings. Whether it's peace or war, I am convinced we shall move rapidly toward extensive state control of our economic life. If progressive groups can achieve an adequate statesmanship, they *may* be able to force Roosevelt to lead this movement with regard to democratic values as a revival of popular government. The fight will be bitter (witness the present NLRB-Bethlehem tangle. Where is Mr. FDR?) But the fight is a chance worth taking. J. RAYMOND WALSH

SIR: I am voting for Norman Thomas. With the exception of Mr. Babson, he seems to be the only person running for President of the United States, at least in California, and I do take a little wine for my stomach's sake.

Mr. Browder's program is very commendable, if a little distraught in its rhetoric, but there are a few details I would like to get straight in my own mind before I could consent to the U. S. entering the USSR. And then, too, Mr. Browder has had so many programs, one gets a little dizzy, doesn't one?

As for the other two candidates. I understand that the exigencies of defense make it desirable that the British Prime Minister be elected in the States this year, but why bother *me*, along with 125,000,000 others? I think it would be good fun to let Mr. Thomas Stearns Eliot come back and decide the issue in company with Mr. Archibald St. Cyril MacLeish, by legerdemain, preferably the haruspices of the baseball bat.
KENNETH REXROTH

From The New Republic Mail Bag

James A. Donovan Jr. of West Roxbury, Massachusetts, was rather startled to see New York's Representative Taber quoted in a news dispatch as saying that if NLRB rulings were to apply to firms handling national-defense contracts, 30 percent of that business would fall through. Mr. Donovan wants to know how come a third of such firms can get away with violating the Wagner Act. . . . H. S. Snyder of New Rochelle, New York, heckles us for the statement that France fell, not because of too much New Dealism or Blumism, but of too little. "Then didn't the victory of Germany establish the possession of this element that France lacked?" He concludes, "If we're both ready to stop this nonsense and return to rationality, doesn't the German-French situation really prove that *what* a nation unites on is less important than the *fact* of *unity*?" All right, have it your *own* way.

John J. Hamilton of Pasadena says that after sixteen years' full-time study of international affairs, he is able to call his shots. He says both the war and the Axis will collapse in the spring of 1941. He says our giving eight states to Willkie is "conservatism run wild" and wants Willkie to give them back—won't let him keep Maine even. . . Gayle Lechner of Ottawa, Illinois, thanks us for Edward Newhouse's "Everything Will Be All Right" (September 30), and says that the problem Newhouse stated is troubling a lot of people. It should be followed up; "the question is really too vital to discontinue."

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Books in Review

"I Was There But I Didn't See It Happen"

A GERMAN "military mission" has just filtered into Bucharest and, as usual, we are all terribly surprised. It's a funny thing, but we were looking the other way when it happened. This, queerly enough, is what we were doing when Norway was invaded, when Leopold surrendered, when France collapsed, and so on. Now Hitler is a very fast mover, and there is a censorship, but still. . . . Never before have we supported such an army of correspondents in the hotels and cafés of Europe, never before has the correspondent been considered such an ornament to our democratic culture—yet we are nearly as much in the dark today as we were in 1815 when Jackson fought the Battle of New Orleans, not knowing that peace had been made two weeks before in Ghent.

In two or three months we will have a book by a correspondent who lived through it all in Bucharest, a book that will be lively with personalities and cliques, and heavy with anti-fascist pieties and advice to the democracies, and poignant with descriptions of the scenery as seen through the window of the *very last train* in which the correspondent made his thrilling escape. If we in America are not in the war when the book comes out, we will read it and feel that the guilt of our isolation has been washed away, because we, too, will have been harrowed, if only spiritually; we, too, will have participated in something Big. If we *are* in the war, it will not be necessary for us to feel this, and the book will have no sale.

Below are the titles of six recent books[1] that attempt to "cover" some aspect of the world situation. They are not the best of the foreign-correspondent books, but they are not altogether worthless. It would be unfair to single any one of them out for blame; they are merely examples of the type. As the bookstore clerks say: if you liked Sheean or Gunther or Duranty, you will like this one. If you still hope for a book with the dateline, "Tomorrow," you may try these. But don't let Hitler surprise you.

It is paradoxical that the closer we are brought by technical means to events, the less we know about them. A few years ago Kaltenborn was broadcasting from a Spanish battlefield; now in our living rooms we can hear the air-raid sirens in London. Yet actually Americans were better informed about the progress of the Kaiser's war than they were about Franco's or are about Hitler's. It is like a ball game: you get a sounder idea of it from the digest in the morning paper than from listening to it on the radio or from reading the play-by-play account in the afternoon sports edition. But the idle cab-drivers parked at street-corners in the summertime, the beer-drinkers in the bars in the fall at World Series time, the fans with an afternoon to waste in their apartments, are not interested really in forming an accurate picture of the game, but in the kinesthetic sensations they achieve, the sense of vicarious life and struggle, the illusion of being a player or a team or both the teams. And it doesn't cost them a cent, not a cent in any kind of coin.

That, I am afraid, is what we are getting out of the war through our news-broadcasters and foreign correspondents. For most of us, the war has been a rather ghastly kind of entertainment, more heartrending—yes, and more exciting, more dangerous—than the Lindbergh baby or the Johnstown flood. Why else do we listen to three, four, five and six broadcasts of stale news in a day and, on a particularly ferocious day, buy two and three newspapers? And how impatient we get if the news is dull! We kept complaining last fall about the phony war, we wanted our money back; now if nothing sensational happens for a week or two, we reply when asked what the news is, "Oh, there's nothing new. The English are still bombing the Germans and vice versa," in a tone that means, how tiresome! Naturally, the show is no musical comedy. We expiate something every time we share the sufferings of the British—courtesy of an aspirin manufacturer or of some New York daily. We feel a kind of white magic in it too: if I keep in touch with the situation, it can't get out of my control; nothing really bad can happen while I have my eye on it. Yet there is a certain strange, exaggerated smugness about the radio listener as the hour for the news broadcast approaches, the ostentatious consultation of the watch, the face composed to hear the worst, the air of a painful duty about to be executed, no matter what the cost to the sensibilities, till a roomful of people around a radio can look like the ladies in the orchestra seats at Carnegie Hall, submitting themselves to a good stiff dose of Beethoven. There is something histrionic and false here, covering up something real—the war is giving us a lift, but since we may be called upon to defend "civilization as we know it," we can't let anyone see that. It would look too much like Vittorio Mussolini, who enjoyed bombing villages from an airplane.

The best story of the war was the story of the Gap. Buying newspapers and hanging on the radio, we felt as if we could squeeze that gap shut with our two hands. And then we learned that the story was not true, that the French had never had a chance, that we had wasted all those days, all that hope and fear, and we felt sold. Somebody surely must have known. There was the censorship, but newspapermen are always full of stories of fooling the

[1] Europe in the Spring, by Clare Boothe. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 324 pages. $2.50.

Whither Europe?, by Arnold Lunn. New York: Sheed and Ward. 270 pages. $3.

AP, the Story of News, by Oliver Gramling. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 506 pages. $3.50.

Eye Witness, by Members of the Overseas Press Club of America. New York: Alliance Book Corporation. 306 pages. $2.75.

Letter from England, by Mollie Panter-Downes. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 259 pages. $2.

The Great Circle, by Carleton Beals. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 358 pages. $3.

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censor with an innocent-sounding cable; you can read any number of them in "AP, the Story of News," a history of the Associated Press. And of course correspondents have not been allowed near the lines in this war; but aren't newspapermen supposed to be wonderful at getting away from the authorities and striking out on their own? You can find lurid testimony to that in a new book called "Eye Witness," in which a number of correspondents of the rank of Linton Wells tell an exploit apiece. And what about the experts here? Why did nobody tell us?

I suppose the principal reason is that we did not want to know, so that to complain about it is like complaining about the low standards of Hollywood movies—in the field of entertainment, under democratic capitalism, people get pretty much what they like. But, even if one recognizes this, one can still see that the newspapers and the radio systems had and still have a strong motive for deceiving us. The press may regard itself as a great public service, but it is a business like any other (without meaning to, "AP, the Story of News" makes this very plain), and its function is to keep people reading and listening as much as possible, so that more and more advertisers can get at them. There is a tendency, therefore, to convert any important news event into an exciting serial story, continued in our next, with the outcome very much in doubt. And here again the war has been like a ball game. If you have listened to many games on the radio, you will have noticed that the announcer always makes the teams sound more evenly matched than they are (there is an announcer on the Pacific Coast who has this formula for spicing up a dull contest: "And remember, folks, a ball game is never over until the last man is out"). Of France, they let us think that an army is never defeated until the last man is shot.

And, hearing those sirens over the radio, shuddering over the pictures of the bombed houses and shops and the exhausted human beings packed into air-raid shelters, warming ourselves with Mollie Panter-Downes's cheerful, homey, well bred cables to The New Yorker, laughing through our tears at the human-interest stories in cockney dialect that appear in the daily press, we are visited nevertheless with flashes of mistrust. We remember the magnificent morale of the Poles and the Finns and the Norwegians and the Dutch and the Belgians and the French, and wonder—what about England? Are our correspondents there enthralled as we are with this great serial story, so enthralled that they go on from day to day, eyes glued to the page, and never want to cheat and try to look at the end? For when we stop to think, we become aware that we have no idea how this war is going. Words rattle in from Europe at great expense but we could do quite as well with the official communiqués. An American general comes home declaring that the British harbors are still there, and he is quoted everywhere with such relief and respect that we know suddenly how suspicious we have become of our ordinary news channels. The Daily News publishes a remarkable formula of its own for estimating German plane losses. It goes something like this: you take the British figure, multiply by ten, add the German figure, and divide by two. Plainly they are ready to turn the whole thing over to the astrology department.

No crumb of comfort is too small for the majority of the correspondents, but lately there has been a contrary trend, which is exemplified in Time magazine and in Clare Boothe's new book. Written in the style of a girlish Hemingway, it describes a great many conversations with people in the international set in France and England last spring, people who were too silly and muddleheaded for words. Miss Boothe tried to set them right, to make them see that Hitler was somebody to be afraid of, but they only got angry, and wouldn't listen, and so Hitler came. Miss Boothe insists that her conversations were not confined to members of the upper classes: she talked to taxi drivers and chambermaids at fine hotels and the girls in the shops, and was apparently satisfied that these people represented the workers. What she found everywhere in the democracies, she declares, was "lethal inertia, woeful ignorance, blind patriotism, corroding jealousies, mortal miscalculation and criminal complacency." There is no doubt that she went to the right quarter to look for these things, but one questions whether the condition was as universal, as classless, or as muddleheaded as she would like us to think. Some suspicion may be cast on her report by a sentence buried in a long letter she quotes: "Clare Boothe told me the other day that the only chance of drawing America into the war was to paint a very dark picture." No doubt this book will be hailed as "tonic," but many people will prefer "Letter from England." If you are going to be "drawn in" to die for a British colonel, it would be pleasanter to believe that he was one of Mrs. Panter-Downes's characters than one of Miss Boothe's. Between propaganda by optimism and propaganda by pessimism, we are lost anyway.

The crusty publisher in the movie, "Foreign Correspondent," who says he has heard enough of isms and is going to send a good police reporter to Europe, is to be deplored as a philistine; still, we know how he feels. In the last twenty years, the whole conception of news-gathering has changed. The reporter has become an editorial-writer and political oracle. Facts look like small potatoes beside "interpretations," predictions, expressions of political partisanship. The tradition of the scoop is dying out, even in the press services, and a scoop now consists in beating your rival to the telegraph office rather than in uncovering a story nobody else has an inkling of. The Richard Harding Davis tradition is dead; when the correspondent travels today he generally takes an official tour. Certainly it is a good thing for a correspondent to think, but not all of them are equipped to do so, and in the midst of the cerebration, the real powers of the journalist atrophy. Vincent Sheean has had many imitators, but these imitators forget that it was not only his political sympathies that made him a good man, but his curiosity, his nerve, his sensitiveness, his capacity for physical endurance.

Today Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Norway and Holland stand like great closed houses, yet here quite possibly the new Europe is being constructed; here are at least partial answers to the questions we are all asking: Can Hitler survive a victory? Will satisfied fascism retain the same character as hungry fascism? What is the new world-state that Hitler is planning? Is there sabotage? Is there resistance? Is there anything left of the socialist movement? Is there any hope for revolution if Hitler is stalemated?—and what if he is not? The New York Times

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sends a correspondent on an official tour of Poland, and we learn that Warsaw is in ruins, that the Jews are in a ghetto, and that there is danger of typhus; but the German propaganda ministry itself could tell us that. And what is going on in England? What kind of ally would she be? Charles Edward Russell, who is strongly interventionist, quotes informants in a recent New Leader to the effect that British industrialists and financiers have been sabotaging production to keep up prices, that there has been a nasty scandal (not in the press, of course), and that Chamberlain, who was friendly to the culprits, had to be let out of the Cabinet. Is this true? We'll never find out from reading the dailies.

One feels that with a few exceptions the American papers have been serviced by a mass of amateur armchair political philosophers. Since the war has begun, the political philosophy has vaporized into mere sympathy or a sense of outrage, and the only thing that remains is the armchair.

MARY MCCARTHY

China's Northwest Frontier

Inner Asian Frontiers of China, by Owen Lattimore. New York: American Geographical Society. 608 pages, with 11 maps. $4.

THE FRONTIER has long been recognized as one of the major formative influences in American life and American historical development. Its significance as a field of research and interpretation became most clearly marked after Frederick J. Turner's suggestive theses appeared in 1893. Owen Lattimore's full-length study of the Chinese frontier, and its relation to the evolution of Chinese society, is no less stimulating and original. It has the advantage of dealing with an extremely rich cultural background.

A frontier of somewhat analogous character, but probably effecting a much slighter impress on the less malleable Chinese way of life, has always existed along China's southern line of advance; the influx of millions of Chinese into the southwestern provinces is even today completing the cultural absorption of surviving tribesmen. But China's real frontier, which has played a leading role in Chinese statecraft has lain to the north and west in inner Asia, along the Manchurian, Mongolian, Turkestan and Tibetan borders.

Here emerges the significant contrast with the frontier in our own national life. The northwest frontier of China was a historical dividing line between the Chinese civilization of intensive agriculture, congenial to the river valleys and irrigable plain, and the pastoral nomadism of the steppe, with its classical locus in Mongolia. It was marked by the Great Wall, in essence, because it could not be obliterated. Neither society could reshape the other in its own mold, and therefore neither could permanently establish its supremacy.

Some of the most fascinating sections of the book are concerned with the origins of these contending societies. In these chapters Mr. Lattimore summarizes and himself supplements the scholarly contributions of recent decades. Chinese civilization as we know it probably originated in the great bend of the Yellow River, where the porous loose soil facilitated the first tentative steps toward agriculture and irrigation. Increasing skill in the handling of water-conservancy works brought the lower Yellow River under control, and led to the formation of a secondary center of growth in the Yangtze River valley. The advantage of large-scale, coördinated enterprise in water control encouraged the organization of extensive feudal and national states and, after a series of bitterly fought wars, resulted in the establishment of a unified empire under Ch'in Shih Huang-ti in 221 B. C. During the feudal era there also developed the typical Chinese bureaucracy, formed of the landholding scholar-gentry, which later became the administrative apparatus of the imperial state.

The growth of the Ch'in state paralleled and in considerable measure even stimulated the appearance of pastoral nomadism in the Mongolian steppe. Early wars and alliances of the expanding Chinese people, Mr. Lattimore suggests, were merely part of the process of absorption of those neolithic peoples in China which did not at first take the "Chinese" path of evolution toward an intensive agriculture. Such of them as refused to submit were eventually pushed back to the fringes of the steppe. True pastoral nomads, shaken loose from the edges of the frontier, were ranging the open steppe during the later stages of China's rise to power.

A "mixed" society developed on the frontier margin between China and the steppe. On one side, the Chinese farmer "devolved" toward an extensive agriculture, on the other the Mongolian herdsmen "evolved" toward a more settled mixed economy. In periods of peace the depth of this intermediate region increased, but it could never attain real stability or independent stature. A prime problem in statecraft, both for China and the rulers of the steppe, was to subordinate the frontier margin to their own social-economic system, in order to curb its centrifugal pull away from their centers of political power. In periods of acute conflict the margin tended to shrink to a sharp line of cleavage, defined by the Great Wall. It always reappeared, however, thus perpetuating the antagonism between the two types of society and presenting a continuous problem to successive Chinese dynasties, whether under native control or dominated by Mongol and Manchu usurpers from beyond the frontier. Only modern industrialism properly applied offers, in the author's belief, the possibility of linking steppe and farmland in a new synthesis, and thus overcoming their millennia of antagonism.

In the course of his work, Mr. Lattimore elaborates a cycle of nomad history, as well as of Chinese. The Chinese "cycle," from vigor and strength at the beginning of a dynasty to weakness and decay at the end, had often been noted. Mr. Lattimore attributes this phenomenon to the tendency of the scholar-gentry bureaucracy to divert a larger and larger share of taxation from their private landholdings as the dynasty matured, thus forcing increased state exactions from the mass of the peasantry and calling forth unrest and rebellion. The chapters dealing with the main frontier regions should be read for their analysis of present-day Soviet and Japanese policy, notably in Manchuria, Mongolia and Sinkiang. Mr. Lattimore's volume is especially important for its fertile suggestiveness, its wealth of conceptual and hypothetical data. For this reason alone, it is destined to exert a profound influence on scholarship in its field.

T. A. BISSON

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No News About Dostoevsky

Dostoevsky: The Making of a Novelist, by Ernest J. Simmons. New York: Oxford University Press. 426 pages. $3.

MR. SIMMONS has wisely refrained from adding a third biography of Dostoevsky to the two that have appeared in English in recent years. Instead, he has undertaken a literary study, bringing into the discussion only those aspects of his hero's personal history which, in his opinion, elucidate the writer's thought and "creative process," as he likes to call it. He is under the impression that he has thus done something quite original. In the introduction we are told, among other things, that most critics have mistakenly treated Dostoevsky as a prophet, a thinker, a student of psychology or of the social sciences, not primarily as a novelist. This is a surprising impeachment. As a matter of fact, it is as a great practitioner of the craft of fiction that Dostoevsky has generally been treated by the critics and, for all Mr. Simmons' frequent aspersions upon them, it is upon their findings that his book rests.

Not that his sole concern is with the merit of these novels and stories as such. He admits that he seeks in them the key to the man, and he is at pains to show how Dostoevsky's fictions reflect his "intellectual and spiritual growth." For a study of this nature, Dostoevsky's personality, particularly certain morbid aspects of it, is not given sufficient attention. Where our author does present biographical facts, he is usually on solid ground. Only why insist that Dostoevsky in his youth took part in a genuine revolutionary conspiracy? This is not a certainty, but merely a rather shaky theory of Dolinin's.

Mr. Simmons traces Dostoevsky's development by taking up the stories and novels in their chronological order. He gives the genesis of each, retails the plot, and discusses the characters. Dostoevsky's notebooks, piously preserved by his widow and published in recent years, allow our author to explore to his heart's content the embryology of the novels, a task as rewarding as it is easy. When it comes to the characters, he has worked out an interesting formula: each is either a Meek, a Self-Willed or a Double, that is, one in whom pride and submission are in violent conflict. The formula does make for order, but Mr. Simmons is inclined to apply it rather mechanically and with Procrustean results, oversimplifying a matter which requires subtler and deeper probing. As a result, Dostoevsky's insights into the psyche are not sufficiently thrown into relief. He allows that many of the novelist's chief figures are "embodied ideas," and that "his great works . . . are conceived in the spirit of religious and philosophical thought"; and so, like the very critics whom he takes to task, he devotes much of his comment to Dostoevsky's thinking. He also examines the ideas expressed in the forensic writings. His exposition and analysis are able, if somewhat heavy-handed. He merely hints at the bearing of Dostoevsky's thought upon the present conflict between the authoritarian and the democratic ideology, thus forgoing a real opportunity.

In what purports to be a literary study, one misses also a scrutiny of the novelist's technique. There is no doubt that Mr. Simmons considers Dostoevsky a most effective writer. One wishes that he had given more attention to the way in which the effects are achieved. Nor is there, as there should be, a consideration of what Dostoevsky contributed to the art of fiction and what his influence has been on those who came after him.

In summing up, Mr. Simmons writes, "The evidence of the present study seems to justify the conclusion that the dual impulses of his nature were the most significant factor in the development of his creative art and profoundly influenced his opinions on religious, social and political questions." By "dual impulses" he apparently means something more than the emotional ambivalence which is normal. He is saying that to the end Dostoevsky remained a house divided against itself, and that his work was shaped by his search for an integration that he never achieved. This is an acceptable thesis. But so competent a student as Mr. Simmons will admit that his conclusion has been reached by earlier investigators. Our author has a good objective view of his man, though it is not a fresh view, and he is not sufficiently *en rapport* with his subject, does not identify himself with him closely enough, to give new meaning to a twice-told tale.

AVRAHM YARMOLINSKY

An Unfashionable Poet

Pattern of a Day, by Robert Hillyer. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 81 pages. $2.

ROBERT HILLYER's poetry has had the benediction of a Pulitzer Prize, and it commands a considerable popularity with what might be called the lay reader. By poets and critics it has been largely dismissed or ignored, as though with its traditional measures it were somehow unworthy of our confused times and experimental tempers. I would propose a different view.

Hillyer began with sonnets and lyrics when the free-versifiers were in full cry; and he similarly continued while Eliot ruled the waves and later during the reign of the political document. We may begin after twenty-five years to doubt if this walking against the crowd—a symbol in one of his new poems—is mere academic escapism. Hillyer has deliberately cultivated the patterns of English poetry as consistent with his belief ("In Time of Mistrust" and "Variations on a Theme") in design in human existence. And there is the first clue to Hillyer's distinction as contrasted with any number of poets who in our time have been conventional poets for want of any convictions, ideological or technical.

Hillyer's technique is the second clue. He has paid the price many times for his fondness for the soothing tone; though his work has hardened, such new pieces as "Clear Melody" and "Rosewood" rise and fall in a dulcet inconsequence one soon forgets. Yet when he sharpens his style to the finer edges of "The Dance Will End at Midnight" or enriches it to the haunting fullness of "Night Piece," his work begins to stay in the memory. And in "Visitants" he tightens all the strings and produces a drama of the dead and living which is solid, unforgettable lyric evocation.

On the one hand he has not been guilty of the literary falsity of Miss Millay's traditional exercises; on the other, his impeccable ear, his humor and his consistent poetics

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distinguish him from the Tristram Coffins and Edward Davisons. The deliberate and the inevitable limitations of his kind of verse—and they are on view in "Pattern of a Day"—require of genuine criticism extended discussion, and I would say only by way of beginning it that they happen not to be the limitations popular with recent critical judgment.

W. T. SCOTT

Paul Strand's Portfolio

Photographs of Mexico, by Paul Strand. New York: Virginia Stevens. 20 plates. $15.

AMONG contemporary American photographers Paul Strand is distinguished by the meticulousness of his prints. He polishes to a point of steely perfection. Yet he is not merely a craftsman. In those early prints of his—published in the concluding numbers of Camera Work—he pictured the city as an iron hall inhabited by the prisoners and the blind. No one can forget the terror and the relentlessness of those images. Again, in his confrontation of machine-objects in the twenties, one felt the implacability no less than the perfection of those instruments, while in the pictures of plants, wood and stone, he registered a kind of iridescent wonder before the vegetable and mineral universe. Even the shores of Gaspé or the New Mexican desert —in the early thirties—had the quality of something engraved imperishably in metal.

More recently Mr. Strand has traveled in Mexico. The present portfolio is composed of twenty prints he made there before producing his well known film, "The Wave." They are divided into three groups. The first presents the landscape or the buildings. Here one regards them somewhat as a spectator, save in "The Plaza" (No. 10), where the sun seems to have baked the very sky. A second group is composed of figures. Men or women, children or old people, they sit immutably in the sun, waiting—waiting always for tomorrow. Among these, the writer's favorites are "Woman" (No. 6)—whose shawl seems to be woven of steel filings and who sits in a memorable patience with her market-basket—and "Boy" (No. 7), who has obtained all the sympathy of the photographer as he gazes out with eyes that are older than they should be. Here the size of the print—somewhat larger than most of the others —has given an amplitude of space which seems to enhance everything that the photographer has to say about the wistful child. Finally, in the figures from religious shrines, Mr. Strand has penetrated at the same time that he has caressed something very deep in the heart of Mexico. The "Cristo with Thorns" (No. 17) leans over sadly, a creature no less of blood than of mercy, while the pyramidally constructed Virgin (No. 3) offers a perpetual grace to those who come before her. Anguish is in them—and a terrific directness—the twin qualities of all Strand's best work. He may be proud of these new advances in his "line."

The portfolio itself has been made possible by a new lacquer process, Strand's own, which recaptures much of the original quality of his platinum prints. Its greatest advantage is that it will make him more available to the country at large than his all-too-infrequent New York exhibitions. The public needs to confront such examples

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today, and it is about time that America generally became acquainted with the faithful and somber work of its premier print-maker, Paul Strand. JEROME MELLQUIST

A Reader's List

Biography and Memoirs

SCHOOLMASTER OF YESTERDAY, by Millard Fillmore Kennedy and Alvin F. Harlow (Whittlesey House, $2.75). A lively, gossipy addition to the list of country doctor-lawyer-preacher-editor memoirs: the story of three generations of Indiana district schoolteachers, from the days of the frontier to the Machine Age, told by the third of the Kennedys. Full of anecdote and homely philosophy.

MEN AND CITIES, by Inman Barnard (Dutton, $3). The dean of the American colony in Paris and former right-hand man of James Gordon Bennett talks entertainingly about the great men and women he has known in a lifetime that stretches from Abraham Lincoln to Adolf Hitler.

DOCTOR IN ARABIA, by Paul W. Harrison, M.D. (John Day, $3). An American medical missionary tells of three decades of practice among the Arabs and Bedouins of the Persian Gulf. A vigorous account of the effort of a few men to pit modern medicine against the worst conditions the world could offer.

DIPLOMAT OF DESTINY, by Sir George Franckenstein (Alliance, $3). The autobiography of the Austrian diplomat who represented his country at the Court of St. James from 1920 until *Anschluss*. In the embassies of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy at St. Petersburg, Rome, Tokyo and London, the author also witnessed at close hand the events that led to the first World War, for which he holds Russia and Serbia responsible. An entertaining potpourri of history, anecdotes and personal reflections.

Science

PROGRESS IN MEDICINE, by Iago Galdston (Knopf, $3). A fascinating review of medical achievements in the past hundred years, by the educational director of the New York Academy of Medicine. The topics covered are bacteriology, nutrition, the glands, psychiatry and clinical developments. Warmly human in tone, combining stores of knowledge with a tempered conviction of the social responsibilities of medicine.

UNRESTING CELLS, by R. W. Gerard (Harpers, $3.75). The endlessly changing adventure of life, growth and decay, as reflected in the fundamental units of all organisms, the cells. Written by a competent American physiologist with a gift for popularizing difficult knowledge, this profusely illustrated volume is a good introduction to the processes of evolution from ameba to man, and is particularly valuable for its detailed accounts of the chemistry of cell development.

A SURGEON EXPLAINS TO THE LAYMAN, by M. Benmosche (Simon and Schuster, $3). "Speaking of operations," here is the book which will take you right into the operating room and let you see yourself as the surgeon sees you under ether. The author, a Mount Sinai Hospital man of wide experience, writes with disarming candor of modern surgical techniques, ranging from appendicitis and stomach ulcers to cancer and brain tumors. Good for the tough-minded and for those who prefer a little correct knowledge to many morbid fears.

Fiction

GOD BLESS THE DEVIL!, by James R. Aswell, Julia Willhoit, Jeanette Edwards, E. E. Miller, Lena Lipscomb and Ann Kelley (Chapel Hill, $2). Better than most attempts to capture the lore and lying of the various courthouse squares, this collection has twenty-five tall stories as you can still hear them told. Most of it is good vernacular (the section of Negro dialect is awful) and moves in a good story way, and some of it is what you never knew till now.

WHO DWELL WITH WONDER, by Kathleen Coyle (Dutton, $2.50). Three sisters, vastly different in character, beauty and experience, are reunited for a brief period at their sick mother's house. Into the delicate network of tense emotions and implicit tragedy is woven a moving story, which reveals a fine and sharpened perception of human relationships.

THE ROAD RETURNS, by Paul Corey (Bobbs-Merrill, $2.50). More about the Midwestern family of "Three Miles Square." Here they send a son to France in 1918, lose their farm, struggle through the post-war depression—in short, follow a sturdy American pattern. A fine, warm-hearted story, written with kindliness and feeling about genuine people; at the start you know their faces and by the end you are one of the family.

Contributors

EDWARD D. KLEINLERER has had twenty years' experience as a correspondent in Italy and the Near East. For some ten years he was connected with educational activities in the League of Nations.

FRANK D. GRAHAM is professor of Economics at Princeton University. He is well known through his writings on protective tariffs, unemployment, finance and international trade.

ROSE M. STEIN is the author of "M-Day" and has contributed to various periodicals on subjects dealing chiefly with labor.

A. B. SEAMAN is the pseudonym of a British sailor who prefers not to reveal his name or that of his ship, while he is still serving with it.

TED POSTON is now employed as a field representative for the National Defense Advisory Commission, assigned to the job of integrating Negro workers into defense industries. He was formerly a reporter for The New York Post and city editor of The Amsterdam News.

HOWARD NUTT has contributed poems to The Yale Review, Poetry, The New Masses, etc. His first book of poems, "Special Laughter," will be published by the James A. Decker Press in December.

MARY MCCARTHY was formerly an editor of Partisan Review. She has contributed to The Nation and The Southern Review as well as The New Republic.

T. A. BISSON has studied economic and political conditions in China and Japan as a Foreign Policy Association research associate.

AVRAHM YARMOLINSKY, chief of the Slavonic Division of the New York Public Library, is the author of "Dostoevsky: A Life," and other books. He is working now on a study of the early phases of the Russian revolutionary movement.

W. T. SCOTT is a reporter on The Providence Journal and has published a book of verse, "Biography for Traman."

JEROME MELLQUIST was formerly art editor of The Sunday Brooklyn Eagle. He is preparing a book on Modern American Art for spring publication.

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